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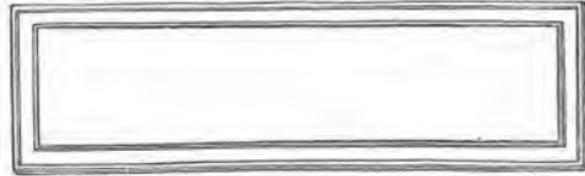
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H. Dens:

2.-

NATHAN THE WISE.



PORTRAIT OF LESSING.

Frontispiece.

Nathan the Wise

A Dramatic Poem
in Five Acts by
G. E. Lessing

Translated by

William Jacks *ob: Aug. 1907.*

Introduction by

Archdeacon Farrar

Etchings by

William Strang

GLASGOW : Published for the Translator by
JAMES MACLEHOSE & SONS, Publishers to
the University. 1894

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PREFACE.

SOME years ago, when preparing some lectures on German Literature, I was unable to find what I considered a correct reproduction of many passages in this work, and being much impressed by the lofty thoughts of Lessing's powerful mind, I formed the intention of translating the book whenever I had sufficient leisure. After re-entering Parliament, and experiencing what so many business men do experience—the ennui of listening to the repetition of arguments in debates already practically concluded—I found relief in employing some of that time and other spare moments in carrying out my purpose.

I have, in making this translation, been guided chiefly by the desire of rendering a faithful reflex of Lessing's meaning, not feeling myself bound

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by rigid rules of dramatic versification so long as the language flowed smoothly, and was appropriate to the individuality of the character employing it.

I shall be amply rewarded if my version affords the reader as much pleasure and instruction as it has afforded to myself.

It is fortunately not necessary for me to go into the history, meaning, and influence of this thoughtful work. This has been done in the able and comprehensive Introduction of my esteemed friend Archdeacon Farrar, to whom I gratefully express my sincere sense of obligation.

WILLIAM JACKS.

THE TEMPLAR AND RECHA—

He, suddenly from smoke and flame
Stood once again before us ;
And with his strong arms bearing her aloft.

ACT I., SCENE I.

To face page 8.



Act I

Scene I.

Once to see the gentle creature he had saved,
Who could not rest, until before his feet
She'd wept her tears of gratitude.

Nathan.

Well?

Daja.

In vain ! To all entreaty he was deaf,
And poured such bitter mocking on me specially.

Nathan.

Until you felt rebuffed.

Daja.

No, far from that,
I stood each day before him, and met each day
The usual scorn. Much I suffered from him,
And more would have endured ; but since long
He comes no more the palms to visit, which
Shade the grave of our arisen Lord,
And no one knows where he abides.
You are surprised ? and ponder ?

Nathan.

I'm but considering what impression
May by this be made, upon a mind like Recha's.
To find herself so scorned by one, whom

She is forced so highly to esteem. Repulsed,
And yet so much enticed. In sooth,
There heart and head must long time strive.
If misanthropy or melancholy shall prevail,
Oft *neither* conquers, and phantasy,
Which often mingles in the strife, makes
sentimentalists,
By which the head now plays the part of heart,
And then the heart of head. Oh, ill exchange !
The last, I can discern, is Recha's case.
She's fallen into sentimentalism.

Daja.

But yet so gentle
And so amiable.

Nathan.

Is still but sentimentalism.

Daja.

Especially one—if you will, call it—whim
Is very dear to her. That the Templar
Is no earthly being, nor one of earthly origin,
But is the angel under whose protecting hand,
From childhood up, her gentle heart
Believed itself most gladly cared for.
And from the cloud where erst he hid—
As Templar suddenly appeared—hovered o'er her,
even

In the fire. Don't smile. Who knows?
At least in smiling leave to her a dream,
In which Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan unite.
So sweet a dream !

Nathan.

To me sweet also. Go, worthy Daja, go ;
See what she does, if I may speak to her.
Then will I seek this wild capricious Guardian
Angel,
And if it pleases him yet to sojourn with us,
Or if he still will play such knighthood mannerless
I'll find him without doubt and bring him here.

Daja.

You're undertaking much.

Nathan.

Then this sweet dream will soon make room
For sweeter truth. For see you, Daja,
A human being dearer is to man, than is an angel.
Then certainly with me you'll not be much dis-
pleased,
To see this angel-sentimentalist cured.

Daja.

You are so good, and all the while so bad.
I go ; but see, look there ; she comes herself.

SECOND SCENE.

RECHA, and the foregoing.

So you are really here indeed, my father ?
I thought you had but sent your voice beforehand.
Why are you still? What mountains, deserts,
and what
Streams divide us now? You breathe in the same
place
With her, and do not run to embrace your Recha ?
Your poor, poor Recha, who was all but burned.
Yes, all but burned—but only “all but.” Do not
shudder.
It is a horrid death—to burn. Oh me !

Nathan.

My child, my own dear child.

Recha.

You had to cross the Tigris, Jordan, and the
Euphrates,
And who knows all what rivers else? How often
Have I trembled for you, until the fire came so near
Myself ! For since the fire has been so near me,
It seems Refreshment, Comfort,
Even Deliverance, to die by water.
But you're not drowned, and I'm not burned.
We'll be right glad, and give our thanks to God.

He bore you and the boat, on wings of *unseen* angels,
Over the faithless stream; my angel he commanded
To bear me on his milk-white pinions,
Visibly from out the raging flame.

Nathan (aside).

White pinions! Oh yes, yes, the white-spread
mantle
Of the Templar.

Recha.

He visibly bore me thro'
The fire, encircled by his wings. Therefore
I've seen an angel face to face, ay, and that angel
mine.

Nathan.

Recha was worthy of it,
And can see in him nought lovelier than he in her.

Recha (smiling).

Whom flatter you, my father? The angel
Or yourself?

Nathan.

Yet, had a man—
A man of nature's daily nourishing—done thee
This service, he must have seemed an angel
Unto thee. He must and would.

Recha.

No, not such an angel, but
Certainly a real angel do I mean. Have you
Yourself not taught me the possibility, that
Angels are—that God by them will wonders
Work to those who love Him well? And I
Love God, indeed I do.

Nathan.

And He loves you, and for you,
And such as you, works daily miracles, and
Has done so from all eternity.

Recha.

That I most gladly hear.

Nathan.

Why? Because
It sounds so everyday-like and so natural,
That a veritable Templar should have saved thee ;
Would it have been less of a miracle? The greatest
Miracle still is this—that real, true miracles can
Become so commonplace, and should become so.
Without such, a thoughtful man had scarcely
Named the word, which children alone should use,
Who stare at everything unusual, and follow any
novelty.

Daja (to Nathan).

Why will you with such subtleties destroy her
Brain, already overstrained without them ?

Nathan.

Let be. Were it not
Miracle enough, my Recha should be rescued
By a man, whom no small miracle himself
Had saved ? No small miracle indeed !
For who has ever heard before, of Templar
Spared by Saladin ? of one
That to be spared once hoped,
Or wished, or for his freedom offered
More than the leathern girdle, which bore
His steel, and at the most, might give his sword ?

Recha.

That helps my case my father. For see
He was no Templar ; he seemed but one :
A captive Templar comes to Jerusalem
But unto certain death ; none such may walk
Her streets too freely. How then could one
Save me at night and voluntarily ?

Nathan.

There how ingenious !
Daja, now your version. From you I learned
He here was captive sent, and
Doubtless you know more.

Daja.

Well yes, it is so said ; but 'tis said also,
 That Saladin forgave the Templar,
 From the resemblance to some brother, most
 Dear to Saladin, but it is many scores of years
 Since he no longer lives. His name
 I know not, nor even where he lived ;
 But so the story goes, so quite incredible,
 There's likely nothing in the whole affair.

Nathan.

Ay, Daja, why then so incredible ? I hope not,
 Tho' it may well be so, that you prefer
 To believe in something still less credible ?
 Why could not Saladin, to whom his kinsfolk
 Are even yet so dear, in early years
 Have loved a brother far above the rest ? Are
 Not two faces e'er alike ? Are early impressions
 Always lost ? Does like no longer bring forth like ?
 Since when ? Where lurks then the incredible ?
 Indeed wise Daja, then were for you
 No further miracle, and only yours require,
 Or shall I say deserve, belief.

Daja.

You mock.

Nathan.

For you mock me. Yet,
 Be it as it may, the saving Recha must remain

A miracle, and possible alone with Him,
 Who makes the strong decrees and projects firm
 Of kings His sport ; if not, indeed, His scorn ;
 Yet leads them gently by the weakest thread.

Recha.

My father, if I err, you know 'tis most unwillingly.

Nathan.

Quite the reverse. You court instruction ;
 See now, a forehead arched in this way or in that,
 A nose formed one way or the other,
 The eyebrows which on sharp or heavy bones
 Point this way or point that—a line,
 A bend, a crowfoot, or a wrinkle, a mole,
 A nothing, on some wild European's face,
 And you are saved from fire in Asia.
 Is that no miracle, superstitious folk ?
 Why strive ye then to have an angel ?

Daja.

Where, Nathan, is the harm, if I may speak,
 If one believes an angel saved her, not a man ?
 Does one not feel by so much more the nearer
 To the great mysterious Cause of her deliverance ?

Nathan.

Mere pride and naught but pride ; the iron pot
 Would fain be lifted from the flame with silver tongs,

B

So as to deem itself a pot of silver. Pshaw !
 And where's the harm, ask ye ? where's the harm ?
 Where is the good ? might I reply, because
 Thy "feeling oneself thereby nearer God"
 Is nonsense or is blasphemy.
 But it does harm, ay, does much harm indeed.
 Come, listen to me. Is it not true that she, and
 You especially, would gladly render some
 Great service unto the being who hath saved her,
 Be it man or angel ? Is this not true ?
 Now what service, what great service, could ye
 Unto an angel render ? You could but thank him,
 To him sigh and pray, and melt in rapture at his
 name,
 Upon his holy day could fast and do your alms.
 All that is nought ; for it doth always
 Seem to me, you and your neighbour thereby gain
 Much more than he. Your fasting
 Maketh him not fat, your spending
 Maketh him not rich ; more glorious
 By your raptures he is not, and no more
 Mighty by your confidence. Is that not so ?
 But then a man !

Daja.

Ah yes, a man indeed more opportunity
 Had given to render him some service,
 And God knows how gladly we were ready ;
 But he would nought, required absolutely nothing—

Was in and with himself so satisfied, as only
Angels are—angels alone can be.

Recha.

At last, as utterly he vanished.

Nathan.

Vanished? How then vanished? no longer
Showed himself amongst the palms? How?
Have you inquired further after him?

Daja.

Well, that we did not.

Nathan.

You did not, Daja? No! Now see then;
Where's the harm, you fearful sentimental?—
For should this angel now be sick—

Recha.

Sick!

Daja.

Sick—that surely he won't be—

Recha.

What shuddering cold
Comes over me; Daja, my forehead usually so warm
Becomes at once as ice.

Nathan.

He is a Frank,
And to this climate unaccustomed. Is young—
And to the labour of his Order—to hunger
And to watching, still unused.

Recha.

Sick, sick.

Daja.

Nathan only means that it were possible.

Nathan.

And there he lies, hath neither friend,—nor gold,
To win him friends.

Recha.

Oh father, father.

Nathan.

He lies there without nursing, without advice or
consolation,
A prey to agony and death.

Recha.

Where? where?

Nathan.

He who for one he had ne'er seen,
Nor known— Enough it was a man—
He sprang into the flames.

Daja.

Spare her, Nathan ; spare her.

Nathan.

And would not nearer know whom he had saved,
That thanks might be avoided.

Daja.

Oh Nathan, spare her.

Nathan.

Desirèd not again to see her, unless it were
To save her for the second time. Enough—
It is a man.

Daja.

Oh cease, and look.

Nathan.

Who, dying, naught for consolation had,
Save of this act the consciousness.

Daja.

Cease, cease, I say ! you're killing her.

Nathan.

And you killed him—at least
Might have him killed. Recha, Recha !
It is medicine and not poison that I'm giving you.

He lives—come to yourself—is likely not even sick,
Nor has been sick.

Recha.

For certain? not dead? not sick?

Nathan.

Most certainly, not dead. For God rewardeth good
Done here on earth—even here below. Now go,
But understand how much easier
Is pious sentimentalism, than is
The practice of good deeds, and also understand
 how gladly
Doth the sluggish man, indulge in pious senti-
 mentalism,
In order that good actions be avoided,
Though he may be unconscious of the motive.

Recha.

Oh my father! leave your Recha nevermore
Alone. It may be indeed, he is but travelling.

Nathan.

Of course it may.
There's a Mohammedan with wondering gaze,
Examining the laden camels. Know ye the man?

Daja.

Oh, that's your Dervish.

Nathan.

Who?

Daja.

Your Dervish—your comrade in chess.

Nathan.

Al-Hafi? That, Al-Hafi?

Daja.

Now treasurer to the Sultan.

Nathan.

How? Al-Hafi? Do you dream again?
'Tis he—indeed it is—he's coming to us.
In with you, quick. What shall I hear?

THIRD SCENE.

NATHAN and the DERVISH.

Dervish.

Tear open now your eyes—wide as you can.

Nathan.

Art thou he? or art not? a Dervish in such splendour.

Dervish.

Well, and why not? Is nothing,
Absolutely nothing, to be made out of a Dervish?

Nathan.

Oh certainly—sufficient to be made—only I thought
A Dervish—I mean a thorough Dervish—
Would allow nothing to be made of him.

Dervish.

Now by the Prophet—
That I am no thorough Dervish may indeed well
 be ;
But if one must.

Nathan.

Must, Dervish, must. Dervish must ?
No man must must; and yet a dervish must ?
What must he then ?

Dervish.

For what he is entreated,
And himself acknowledges as good,
That must a Dervish do.

Nathan.

Now, by our God, you speak the truth—
Let me embrace you, man ; I trust you're still my
 friend.

Dervish.

Ask ye not first what I've become ?

Nathan.

In spite of what you have become.

Dervish.

May not I now be
A fellow in the state, whose friendship
Might be inconvenient ?

Nathan.

If that your heart be Dervish still,
I'll venture it ; the fellow in the state is but your
dress.

Dervish.

Which also will be honour'd. What think ye ?
Guess ; if in your court, what would I be ?

Nathan.

Dervish, and nothing more ; but with that—most
probably also—cook.

Dervish.

Well yes : with you I'd lose my handicraft—
Cook ! not waiter also ? See now, how better I am
known by Saladin,
With him I am his treasurer.

Nathan.

You ? With him ?

Dervish.

Of course,
But only of the smaller treasury—the larger one
His father still controls—his household treasury.

Nathan.

His house is large.

Dervish.

And larger than you think,
For every beggar's of his house.

Nathan.

To beggars yet is Saladin so hostile——

Dervish.

That he proposed to undo them, root and branch,
Even should himself thereby become a beggar.

Nathan.

Bravo ! that's what I meant.

Dervish.

Indeed, he's one already, because his treasury
By sundown every day, is emptier than empty.
The flood, which in the morning rises e'er so high,
By noonday, long hath glided past.

Nathan.

Because that certain channels
Drink it up, and these to fill or stop, is equally
impossible.

Dervish.

Exactly so.

Nathan.

I know it.

Dervish.

Nathan, the case is bad indeed,
When princes are like vultures amongst carcases ;
But when they're carcases amongst the vultures,
The case is ten times worse.

Nathan.

Oh no, no, Dervish ;

No, indeed.

Dervish.

'Tis very well for you to talk.
Come, now. What do you give ? And I
Resign my office in your favour.

Nathan.

What income does your office yield ?

Dervish.

To me ? not much ; but then, to you
Would be most profitable ;
For if the treasury's low, as oft it is,
You open but your sluice and it is filled.
You then can have what interest you will.

Nathan.

Even to cent. per cent. upon the interest ?

Dervish.

Ay, even to that.

Nathan.

Even till my capital is interest alone ?

Dervish.

Now, are you not attracted ? Write then, our
Friendship's act of separation ; for I indeed,
Had greatly reckon'd on you.

Nathan.

Really ? and why and how ?

Dervish.

That you would help me to discharge with honour,
the duties of my office.

That I at all times with you would have an open till.
You shake your head ?

Nathan.

Let us each other clearly understand.

Here we must strict discriminate. You ? why not ?
You Al-Hafi, Dervish, to all I have are always
welcome ;

But Al-Hafi, treasurer to Saladin. H'm ; to him ?

Dervish.

Did I not guess as much ?

That you are always good as wary, as wary are
as wise.

Patience ! what you in Hafi would discriminate,
Will right soon disappear. Behold my
Robe of honour which the Sultan gave,
Before it be in pawn or turned to rags,
As those which clothe a Dervish, will hang
In Jerusalem on a nail ; and I'll be on the Ganges
bank,
Where, free and barefoot, I, with my teachers,
May tread the burning sands.

Nathan.

That's just like you.

Dervish.

And playing chess with them.

Nathan.

Your chief enjoyment.

Dervish.

Think only what seduced me !
That I myself might have no need to beg ?
Or might 'mongst beggars play the rich man's rôle ?
Or were so quickly to be changed
From richest beggar to a poor rich man ?

Nathan.

Well, no ; not that.

Dervish.

'Twas something even more absurd.
I felt me flattered for the first time in my life,
Flattered by Saladin's good-natured fancy.

Nathan.

Which was ?

Dervish.

"A beggar only knows how beggars feel."
"Only a beggar has learned the art, kindly to give to
 beggars."
"Thy predecessor," said he, "was too cold for me ;
"Too harsh—whene'er he gave, he gave un-
 graciously.
"About the receiver first inquired most thoroughly,
"Never content to know the need alone, but
"Aye would know what caused the need, in order
"That, according to the cause, he might dole out
 the charity.
"So will not sure Al-Hafi act. So unkindly kind
"Will Saladin through Hafi not appear.
"Al-Hafi is not like a choked-up pipe
"That gives again the water, impure and in spurts,
"Which it received so clear and pure.
"Al-Hafi thinks, Al-Hafi feels as I."
So sweet did seem the fowler's note,
The finch soon fell into the net.
I dupe was—ay, and of a dupe the dupe.

Nathan.

Gently, my Dervish, gently.

Dervish.

Eh, what? 'Twere no duping then,
To oppress humanity by hundred thousands ;
To strangle, murder, plunder, and exterminate,
And then pose as philanthropist to single individuals.

'Twere no duping, even to ape the acts of the
Most High,
Who giveth to the bad and good,
And sends His sunshine and His showers to
meadows and to desert lands,
And all the while possess not the Almighty's stint-
less hands.

What? Is that not duping?

Nathan.

Enough. Now cease.

Dervish.

Well, let me speak, however, of my own duping
then.

What? Were it not duping only to seek out the
good side of such conduct,
In order, for this good side's sake,
To be a sharer in this duping game? Ha!
Is that not so?

Nathan.

Be quiet, Al-Hafi ; get you to
Your wilderness. I fear that among men
You will unlearn yet, that you are one.

Al-Hafi.

Indeed you're right ; I fear that too. Farewell !

Nathan.

So hasty ! wait a while, Al-Hafi ;
Be sure the desert will not run away : pray wait.
Would he but listen ! Heigh ! Al-Hafi, here !
He's off, and I so keen to question him about our
Templar.
Undoubtedly he'll know him.

FOURTH SCENE.

DAJA (*coming hurriedly*) to NATHAN.

Daja.

Oh, Nathan, Nathan !

Nathan.

Well now, what's the matter ?

Daja.

He shows himself again—again he shows himself.

Nathan.

Who, Daja, who ?

Daja.

He, He.

Nathan.

He ? he ? when does not *He* show himself ?
Just so, your *He* alone is *He*—that should
Not be—not be even were he an angel.

Daja.

He's sauntering beneath the palms, and now
And then he plucks a date.

Nathan.

And eats them as a Templar ?

Daja.

Why will you thus torment me ? Her greedy
Eye discovered him, behind the thick entwined
palms,
And then unceasing followed him. She begs
And conjures you, at once to go to him.
Oh be quick. She from the window will make
Signs to you if he ascend or turn aside ; but pray
do haste.

C

Nathan.

Just as I lighted from the camels ?
 That indeed would not be proper ; but go at once,
 Tell him of my return ; but pray take care.
 The noble fellow has doubtless been averse
 To cross our threshold in my absence, and
 Now will not unwillingly come to us
 Upon the father's invitation. Go !
 Say I invite him, aye and that most heartily.

Daja.

In vain, he will not come ;
 For to be brief, he'll visit with no Jew.

Nathan.

Well go. Go and detain him, or
 At least keep your eye on him.
 Go, I'll follow you directly.

FIFTH SCENE.

A PLACE WITH PALMS.

Under the palms the TEMPLAR is walking. A LAY-BROTHER follows him a little aside as if he would speak to him.

Templar.

He does not follow me for exercise. How at
 His hands he looks askance.

Good brother. . . . I may indeed with justice
Call you father?

Lay-Brother.

Only brother, Lay-Brother only, at your service.

Templar.

Yes good brother, if I aught possessed—
But by my God I have, indeed, got nought.

Lay-Brother.

And yet my warmest thanks.
God render you a thousand fold, what you so
Cheerfully would have given, for 'tis the will and
Not the gift which makes the giver.
But indeed, I was not sent to follow you for alms.

Templar.

Yet sent however?

Lay-Brother.

Yes, from the monastery.

Templar.

Where I just now had hoped to obtain
A frugal pilgrim's meal?

Lay-Brother.

The tables were already set, so pray
Return with me.

Templar.

And why?

It's long indeed since I have tasted flesh;
But what of that, the dates are nicely ripe.

Lay-Brother.

Sir Knight be cautious with that fruit,
Too much of it is bad. It stops the spleen
And turns the blood to melancholy.

Templar.

How then if I wished to feel melancholy?
Yet not to give this warning,
I am sure, have you been sent to follow me?

Lay-Brother.

Oh no! my office
Is to inquire about you, and to feel your pulse.

Templar.

And that you tell me of your own accord?

Lay-Brother.

Why not?

Templar.

(*Aside*—A crafty brother, faith.) Contains your
Cloister many such as you?

Lay-Brother.

That I know not.

Good sir, I must obey.

Templar.

And you obey without much criticizing ?

Lay-Brother.

But good sir, were it then obedience ?

Templar.

(*Aside*—Simplicity is always right.) You may
At least confide to me, who it is that
Would me know more accurately ?
I will be sworn it is not you yourself.

Lay-Brother.

Would that become me ?

What would it profit me ?

Templar.

Whom does it become or profit then ?
Who is so curious about me ? Who ?

Lay-Brother.

The Patriarch I think, for he it was
Who sent me after you.

Templar.

The Patriarch?

Does he not better know the Red Cross on a
mantle white?

Lay-Brother.

How can I know?

Templar.

Well brother, well. I am a Templar and a
prisoner,
And captive made at Tebnin—that citadel
Which we would storm, just as the armistice expired,
In order to push forward straight on Sidon.
I further add, I was the twentieth ta'en,
But am the only one reprieved by Saladin.
With this the Patriarch knows all he should need—
More than he should.

Lay-Brother.

Yet hardly more than he already knows ;
For he would gladly know why you, Sir Knight,
Alone by Saladin were set free.
Ay, you alone.

Templar.

And know I that myself?
With neck unbared, I kneeled already on my cloak

To await the stroke, when Saladin, after keener
gaze,
Springs to my side and gives a sign.
They raise me up and set me free. I wish to thank
him ;
See his eyes in tears ; dumb is he,
Dumb am I ; he leaves and I remain. But
What the explanation is, the Patriarch
Must unravel for himself.

Lay-Brother.

He concludes from it, that God has saved your life
For great and marvellous things.

Templar.

For great things indeed !
To save a Jewish maiden from the fire,
And upon Sinai act as guide to pilgrims,
And such like tasks as these.

Lay-Brother.

All in good time,
And these even are not bad. Besides, 'tis possible
The Patriarch himself has something weighty
planned for you.

Templar.

In earnest brother ? Has he e'er given you such a
hint ?

Lay-Brother.

Well yes. I had to prove you sir, and
See if in reality you were the man.

Templar.

Well then, prove me.

(*Aside*—I'll see how he can prove.) Well now?

Lay-Brother.

The shortest way will be,
To tell you sir, quite openly what 'tis the Patriarch
wants of you.

Templar.

Well?

Lay-Brother.

He much desires to send a letter by you, sir.

Templar.

By me? I am no messenger. Is that a task
So much more glorious than saving Jewish maid-s
from fire?

Lay-Brother.

It must be so ; because,—the Patriarch says,—
This letter is important to all Christendom.
And to convey this letter safe,—the Patriarch says,—

Will be rewarded by a special crown
In heaven high, by God Himself. And
Of this crown—so says the Patriarch—is none
So worthy as Sir Knight, art thou.

Templar.

As I ?

Lay-Brother.

And to earn this crown—
The Patriarch says,—is none so capable as thou.

Templar.

As I ?

Lay-Brother.

Thou here art free, canst everything inspect ;
To storm a city or defend—dost know,
And,—saith the Patriarch,—canst understand and
value
The strength and weakness of the inner second
Wall by Saladin erected ; and canst,—
So says the Patriarch,—with most precision
To the Lord's own warriors, describe it all.

Templar.

Good brother, if I but knew the
Inner contents of this letter.

Lay-Brother.

Ah ! that !—that know I not myself so well.
The letter is, however, to King Philip.
The Patriarch—I've often wondered how a saint
like him,
Who otherwise completely lives in heaven,
Can condescend to get acquainted with all
Things of this lower world, he must dislike it so.

Templar.

Well then ? The Patriarch ?

Lay-Brother.

He knows exactly, quite reliably, where, how,
And with what strength, and from which side
Saladin will open his campaign
In case the war breaks out again.

Templar.

He knows all that ?

Lay-Brother.

Yes ; and wishes greatly, to let King Philip know,
So that he might rightly judge
The danger, if it be so dreadful, that he should now
renew
The truce, cost what it will, which by
Your Order was so bravely broken.

Templar.

That is a Patriarch indeed ;
The good, brave man desires in me
No common messenger ; but a spy.
So tell your Patriarch, my good brother,
So far as you could see, I'm not the man
For this same mission. I'm bound in honour as
A captive, to bear myself as such ; and further,
That the Templar's rôle is to strike boldly with
His steel, but ne'er to meddle with espionage.

Lay-Brother.

I thought as much,
And take it from thee not amiss ; but yet
Indeed, the best's to follow. The Patriarch
Has wormed out the stronghold's name,
And where on Lebanon it stands, in which are hid
The enormous hoards, from which the
Sultan's prudent father pays his hosts, and
Bears the expenses of the army. Saladin
Conveys from time to time his treasure from this
fort,
And barely with an escort—do you see ?

Templar.

Never ! Never !

Lay-Brother.

What could be easier than to overpower
And seize his person and to make an end of him ?

You shudder?
Already have two godly Maronites their service
proffered,
If only one brave man will dare to lead them in the
enterprise.

Templar.

And the Patriarch regards me as this brave man?

Lay-Brother.

He thinks King Philip could from Ptolemais,
Best offer his assistance.

Templar.

To me? to me good brother?
Have you not heard? this instant heard?
Under what obligations I stand to Saladin?

Lay-Brother.

Oh yes I've heard it.

Templar.

And yet?

Lay-Brother.

Well,—the Patriarch thinks,—that's well enough;
Only—God and your Order——

Templar.

Alter nothing!

Impose on me no villainy.

Lay-Brother.

Oh by no means ! Only,—the Patriarch thinks,—
that
Villainy with man may not be villainy with God.

Templar.

To Saladin I owe my life ; should I rob him
Of his ?

Lay-Brother.

Oh well,—

The Patriarch thinks,—that Saladin, as still
The foe of Christ, has gained no right to be your
friend.

Templar.

Friend ? A friend because I won't prove villain to
him,
Ay, a most ungrateful villain ?

Lay-Brother.

Of course—only,—

The Patriarch thinks,—that for service
Rendered us without our wish no thanks are due,
Due neither before God nor man ;
And it is said,—so thinks the Patriarch,—
That Saladin but pardoned you, because
That in your manner and your bearing,
A kinship to his brother seemed so evident.

Templar.

The Patriarch also knows all this, and yet ?
 Ah, were that certain ! Oh Saladin,
 If nature has but formed in me one trait
 Of your departed brother,
 And does no answering voice arise in me ?
 This answering voice can I repress, so as
 To please a Patriarch ?
 Nature, thou liest not ;
 So never in his works doth God
 E'er contradict Himself. Go brother, go !
 Rouse not my gall—but go ! but go !

Lay-Brother.

I go with much more pleasure than I came ;
 Forgive me sir, but our lay brethren are
 Bound obedience to yield to our superiors.

SIXTH SCENE.

The TEMPLAR and DAJA (who had observed the TEMPLAR for a while from a distance and now approaches him).

Daja.

The Lay-Brother left him, as it seems to me,
 Not in the best of humours, yet must I risk my
 message.

Templar.

Now, this is good ; the proverb lies not when
It says, that priest and woman—woman and priest—
Are the two clutches of the devil, and to-day
He throws me from one to other.

Daja.

See I aright ? 'tis you Sir Knight ? now
God be thanked—be thanked a thousand times :
Where have you hid yourself so long ?
Not sick, I hope ?

Templar.

No.

Daja.

You've been quite well ?

Templar.

Yes.

Daja.

We were really much concerned on your account.

Templar.

Indeed ?

Daja.

No doubt you've been away ?

Templar.

Correctly guessed.

Daja.

And but to-day returned?

Templar.

Yesterday.

Daja.

And Recha's father is returned to-day,
And now indeed, may Recha hope?

Templar.

What?

Daja.

What she's so often asked of you ; and now
Her father himself invites you warmly :
He comes from Babylon with twenty heavy laden
camels,
Laden with everything—of splendid spices,
Precious stones, and Indian stuffs—
The best which Persia, Syria, or even Sinai, yields.

Templar.

I'm not a buyer.

Daja.

His folk respect him as a prince,
But I indeed have often wondered,
Why "The Wise" they call him, not "The Rich."

Templar.

To his folk, such words as "Rich" and "Wise,"
Are doubtlessly synonymous.

Daja.

"The Good," they rather ought to call him,
For sir, you cannot think how good he is ;
When he was told what you had done for Recha,
What in that moment would he not have done,
Or given to you—

Templar.

Ay ?

Daja.

Well, try it—come and see.

Templar.

See what ? How quickly pass the moments ?

Daja.

Had I so long stayed with him, were he
Not so good ? Perhaps you think

D

I do not feel my Christian worth ?—
For it was not sung o'er my cradle—
That I to Palestine my husband should accompany,
But to bring up a Jewish child. My husband
Was a noble groom, in Emperor Frederick's host.

Templar.

By birth a Swiss,
To whom the grace and honour was vouchsafed,
With his Imperial Majesty, to drown in the
Same waters. Woman, how often have you
Told this story to me? And will you
Never cease to persecute me thus?

Daja.

To persecute you? Blessed God!

Templar.

Ay indeed, to persecute me.
Once and for all, never wish I to see
Your face again nor hear you. Will
Not for ever be reminded of a deed
Done without thought—o'er which, when
Now I ponder, seems but a puzzle to me.
I do not wish indeed to rue; but
Look you here, should such an incident
Again occur, yours is alone the blame

If I don't act so quickly, but prefer
To inquire beforehand, and let burn
What burn may.

Daja.

Now God forbid.

Templar.

Well then, do me at least the favour, from
This day forward, not to know me.
I beg this of you. And let me with the father not
be troubled.
Jew is Jew, and I a thorough Swabian.
The maiden's image is long since
From my heart effaced, if it were ever there.

Daja.

But yours is not effaced from hers.

Templar.

And why should it be there? Pray why?

Daja.

Who knows? Men are not always what they seem.

Templar.

For certain seldom better.

[*He goes.*

Daja.

Pray wait ! Why hurry so ?

Templar.

Woman, make not the palms even hateful
To me, 'neath which I otherwise so gladly walk.

Daja.

Go then you German bear, go then—
And yet I must not lose the wild beast's trail.

[She follows him at a distance.

SECOND ACT.

FIRST SCENE.

Scene in the Sultan's Palace.

SALADIN and SITTAH *playing chess.*

Sittah.

Where art thou, Saladin? How dost thou play?

Saladin.

Not well? I thought indeed——

Sittah.

For me, and scarcely; take back this move.

Saladin.

And why?

Sittah.

Your knight's exposed.

Saladin.

He is ; well then !

Sittah.

I play fork move.

Saladin.

Tis true. Well check.

Sittah.

How does that help thee ? I protect the king, and
Thou art where thou wert.

Saladin.

I see I can't clear this dilemma without loss.
So be it. Take the knight.

Sittah.

I want him not. I leave him.

Saladin.

Ah thou givest me naught. The position's
Better for thee than the knight.

Sittah.

May be.

Saladin.

Don't count thy cost without thy host ;
 For see—what odds ? That move thou scarcely
 didst expect.

Sittah.

Well no indeed. How could I think
 Thou wert so tired of thy queen ?

Saladin.

Tired of my queen ?

Sittah.

I clearly see I'll win my thousand
 Dinars, and not one farthing more.

Saladin.

How so ?

Sittah.

Don't ask ; for thou hast done thy best to lose,
 And then I find but small account for that.
 Besides, such game is less seductive.
 And don't I gain more when I lose than win ?
 When hast thou not, to comfort me for loss,
 Presented me a double sum ?

Saladin.

Well now my dearest sister, if thou hadst lost,
 Wouldst thou have done thy best to lose ?

Sittah.

At least it may be, dearest brother,
Thy generosity is cause that I no better play.

Saladin.

But we forget the game ; let's finish it.

Sittah.

So is it ? Well then check and double check.

Saladin.

Ay so it is. I did not see that move
By which my queen must also fall.

Sittah.

Could you have helped it ? Let us see.

Saladin.

No, take the queen ; I've
Ne'er been fortunate with that piece.

Sittah.

And with that piece alone ?

Saladin.

Off with her—
It does not hurt my plan, for all's again protected.

SITTAH AND SALADIN—

Well then, check and double check.

ACT ii., SCENE I.

In face page 56.



Act II

SCENE I

Sittah.

With what politeness one should deal with queens,
My brother hath too well instructed me.

[Leaves the queen standing.

Saladin.

Take her or not, I will not move her.

Sittah.

Why take her?—check—check.

Saladin.

Go on.

Sittah.

Check—and check—and check—and check—

Saladin.

And mate.

Sittah.

Not quite; thou canst still interpose
The knight, or which thou wilt, but 'tis the same.

Saladin.

Quite right—well thou hast won, and
Hafi pays. Let him be called at once.
Thou wert not so far wrong, my Sittah,
My heart was not quite in the game,

Was somewhat absent ; and then—
 Who can give meaning to these shining pieces,
 Which else have meaning none, and of naught
 remind one,
 And naught indicate ? Have I played with the Iman ?
 Well then ; losers will have pretext :
 But Sittah, 'twas not these soul-less pieces
 Which made me lose, only thy skill,
 Thy calm and quicker ken—

Sittah.

Just so ;
 Thou'l blunt the loss's sting. Enough,
 Thou wert absent-minded more than I.

Saladin.

Than thou ! what cause hast thou for absent-
 mindedness ?

Sittah.

Certainly not thy absent-mindedness. Oh Saladin,
 When will we play again so happily ?

Saladin.

Then let us play all the more eagerly. Oh thou
 meanest
 Because the war again breaks out ? well let it.
 I have not first unsheathed the sword ; indeed

I'd gladly have renewed the truce,
And for my Sittah also, then secured a dear, good
husband,
And that must be brave Richard's brother,
Yes, Richard's brother must it be.

Sittah.

How pleased thou art, to get a chance to praise thy
Richard.

Saladin.

Had only then our brother Malek
Got Richard's sister for his wife,
Ah ! what a house that would have formed ;
Ay ! the best of all the best houses in the world.
You see I'm nothing loth to praise
Myself as well—I hold me worthy of my friends.
What a race of men that would have given. Ah me !

Sittah.

Have I not always smiled at this fine dream ?
Thou knowest the Christians not—wilt not know
them.
Their pride is to be Christians—not men. For
Even that humanity, which by their Founder
Was rooted in their superstition, that love they
Not because it is humane, but because
He taught it—because so Christ hath done.
Tis well for them He was indeed so

Good a man. 'Tis well for them that they
His virtue can accept on faith, and on belief.
His virtue say I? Not His virtue. His name alone
Shall over all be spread, and shall the name—
Of all good men shame and destroy. The name—
And nothing but the name—is their concern.

Saladin.

Thou meanest, why should they desire
That she, and thou, and Malek should be called
Christians ere Christians you would love as
spouse?

Sittah.

Why yes, indeed—as if by Christians alone,
And that as Christians only, could worthily be made
that love
With which the Creator man and wife endowed.

Saladin.

The Christians believe more wretched things than
even this,
And yet thou'rt wrong. The Templars, not' the
Christians,
Are to blame, and not as Christians are to blame
But as Templars alone. Through them alone
The project fails. They will on no account surrender
Acca, which Richard's sister should to Malek

Bring as bridal dower. And that the knights'
Gain and advantage may no danger run,
Play they the monk, ay, the presumptuous monk ;
And on the chance that fortune might assist
Their cause, scarce could they wait the truce's end.
Well, heartily onward—onward, my gentlemen—
It suits me well ; would that all else
Were as it should be.

Sittah.

Well, what else then
Troubled thee ? and brought thee from thy self-
control ?

Saladin.

That which hath ever brought me from my self.
I've been to Lebanon, and seen our father—
He's overwhelmed with sorest cares.

Sittah.

Alas, alas !

Saladin.

He cannot manage ; he's pinched on every side ;
First here, then there, is want.

Sittah.

What pinches ; what is wanting ?

Saladin.

What else than that, which I scarce deign to name ;
That which when I have is so superfluous, and
When I have it not, so indispensable.
But where is then Al-Hafi? Is no one sent for him ?
This pitiful and cursèd money ; good, Hafi,
That you've come.

SECOND SCENE.

AL-HAFI. SALADIN. SITTAH.

Al-Hafi.

The money from Egypt is probably arrived,
If it be but right plenty.

Saladin.

How, have you news ?

Al-Hafi.

I? Not I. I thought to get it here.

Saladin (walking up and down wrapt in thought).

Pay Sittah, now, a thousand dinars.

Al-Hafi.

Pay, instead of get, that's good ;
For something, that is less than naught.
To Sittah, and again to Sittah ? and lost ?
And again lost at chess ? The game's still standing.

Sittah.

You grant me, I hope, my luck.

Al-Hafi (looking at the game).

How grant—If—You know quite well.

Sittah.

Hush, Hafi, hush !

Al-Hafi (with his eyes still fixed on the board).
Grant it, but to yourself the first.

Sittah.

Al-Hafi, hush !

Al-Hafi to Sittah.

The white were yours ? You offer check ?

Sittah.

It's well he does not hear.

Al-Hafi.

And now his turn to play.

Sittah.

But say, please, I can have my money.

Al-Hafi (*still looking eagerly on the game*).

Well yes; you'll have it, as you always have.

Sittah.

Why? Are you mad?

Al-Hafi.

The game is certainly not finished,
And Saladin, you have not lost.

Saladin (*scarcely listening*).

I have, I have. Pay, pay.

Al-Hafi.

Pay, pay—

There is your queen.

Saladin.

She's worthless, being
No longer in the game.

Sittah.

So give up, and say that I may have my money
brought.

Al-Hafi (still deeply absorbed in the game).

Of course, as always. Even altho'—altho'
The queen is worthless, you're still not nearly mate.

Saladin (advances and throws over the board).

I am—and wish to be.

Al-Hafi.

Just so—like play like winnings—as won, so paid.

Saladin.

What is he saying? What?

Sittah (from time to time signing to Hafi).

Oh well, thou knowest him. He likes to quarrel—
And likes to be entreated—perhaps indeed a little
envious.

Saladin.

Yet surely not of thee? not of my sister?
What hear I, Hafi—art thou envious?

Al-Hafi.

Maybe, maybe;
I'd rather have her brain myself, and
Be myself as good as she—

E

Sittah.

Oh he has always paid, and honourably, and
Will do so to-day. Let him alone ; go Hafi,
Go : I'll shortly send and get the money.

Al-Hafi.

No, I will no longer play this mummery ;
One time or other he must know it.

Saladin.

Who ? and what ?

Sittah.

Hafi, is this your promise ?
Keep you thus your word to me ?

Al-Hafi.

How could I dream that it would go so far ?

Saladin.

Well, and am I told nothing ?

Sittah.

I beg, Al-Hafi, that you be discreet.

Saladin.

Well, this is strange ; what could Sittah
So pathetically, so warmly, of a stranger ask ?
Of a Dervish, rather than of me her brother ?
Al-Hafi, now I must command—speak Dervish.

Sittah.

Now brother, let not a trifle trouble thee ;
 It is not worth. Thou knowest I have
 At various times, this same sum won from
 Thee at chess, and as I'm not in need of money,
 And Hafi's treasury none too full,
 I let the sums remain ; but do not
 Trouble thee, I'll make a present of
 The money, neither to thee my brother,
 To Hafi, nor his treasury——

Al-Hafi.

Yes ; were it only that—only that——

Sittah.

And more such like
 Are also in the treasury left. What
 Thou hast given me from time to time,
 Since a few months, has so been left.

Al-Hafi.

And that's not all——

Saladin.

Not all ? will you speak out or not ?

Al-Hafi.

Since we from Egypt have the gold expected
 She has——

Sittah (to Saladin).

Why listen to him ?

Al-Hafi.

Not only hath received nothing——

Saladin.

Noble woman ! hath also lent her money ?

Al-Hafi.

The whole court hath provided for, and
Hath paid your entire expenditure, hath she alone.

Saladin.

Ah that—that is like my sister (*embracing her*).

Sittah.

And who else than thou, my brother,
Hath made me rich enough to do it ?

Al-Hafi.

He'll make her soon again as poor
As he himself now is.

Saladin.

I poor ? her brother poor ?
When have I less or more e'er had ?
A cloak, a sword, a horse, also a God ;
What need I more—when can He fail me ?
And yet Al-Hafi, I could roundly scold you.

Sittah.

Nay scold him not, my brother ; could I
But so release our father from his cares.

Saladin.

Alas ! there you again dash down my happiness ;
For myself personally I nothing want,
And can want nothing ; but with him—
He is in want, and in him we all. Well
Now, what should I do ? It may be long
Indeed ere the supplies arrive from Egypt,
And God alone knows cause for this delay,
For all is quiet there. Most gladly
Would I economise and scrape and save, did it
Affect myself alone, and none else suffered from it ;
And yet that would but be of small account—
A horse, a dress, and sword I must possess,
And from my God can nothing be withdrawn,
For He indeed is satisfied with little—with my heart
alone.
Indeed Al-Hafi, I have greatly reckoned
Upon the surplus in your treasury.

Al-Hafi.

Surplus ? pray ask yourself, had you
Not impaled me, or at the very least, had choked,
If I'd been caught with any surplus :
Yes, on deficit you might have safely counted.

Saladin.

Well, what is to be done? Could you at first
From none have borrowed, but from Sittah?

Sittah.

And would I, brother, have allowed this right
To be ta'en from me? taken from me by him?
I still maintain this right, and even
My treasury is not yet quite dry.

Saladin.

Only "not quite"—that were the last straw indeed.
Go at once, Hafi; go, arrange!
And pick up how you can, from whom you can;
Go, borrow—promise—only Hafi, observe one
limit,
And borrow not from one I have enriched;
For borrowing from such, might be considered
By them as taking back.
Go to the most avaricious you can find;
They'll lend to me most willingly,
For that they know full well
Their money grows apace, when lent to me.

Al-Hafi.

Indeed, I know none such.

Sittah.

It just occurs to me, I've heard, Al-Hafi,
Your friend is now returned.

Al-Hafī (startled).

Friend? my friend? who might that be?

Sittah.

Your highly-lauded Jew.

Al-Hafī.

A Jew? and highly praised by me?

Sittah.

Whom God—the expression, I full well
Remember, which you yourself employed concerning—
ing him—

Whom his God, of all possessions in this world,
Had with the least and with the greatest
Endowed in fullest measure.

Al-Hafī.

Did I say so? What could I have meant by it?

Sittah.

The least was,—Riches, the greatest,—Wisdom.

Al-Hafī.

How? And of a Jew? Of a Jew have I said that?

Sittah.

Ay, what would you of your brother Nathan not
have said?

Al-Hafi.

Oh so, of him? of Nathan? He really ne'er
 Occurred to me. Well really? And is he
 At last returned? Ay. Well, he can't
 Be so badly off. Quite right.
 His people called him by the title 'Wise,'
 Also by that of 'Rich.'

Sittah.

'The Rich' they call him now, and
 More than ever. The city rings with
 The reports of all the goods and treasures he has
 brought.

Al-Hafi.

Well, if he's 'The Rich' again, he'll also be 'The
 Wise.'

Sittah.

What think you, Hafi, of approaching him?

Al-Hafi.

And what with him? Sure not to borrow?
 Ay, then you'll know him! He lend!
 It is his special wisdom that he lends to none.

Sittah.

You painted to me once a different picture.

Al-Hafî.

In need he'll lend you goods—but money?
Money? Money never! Beyond that
However, he's a Jew as few Jews are:
Rare judgment has he, knows also how to live, and
Plays chess superbly. And yet in bad points
Is he as distinguished as in good, from other Jews.
On him—on him, pray, do not count.
He gives the poor indeed, and that in spite of
Saladin;
And if perhaps, not quite so much, yet quite as
willingly,
And always perfectly without parade.
Thus Jew and Christian, Mahomedan and Parsee,
Are all alike to him.

Sittah.

And such a man—

Saladin.

How comes it I have never heard of this same man?

Sittah.

He would not lend to Saladin?
Not to that Saladin who supplies the needs of
others—not his own?

Al-Hafi.

Therein you see again the Jew—the absolutely Common Jew. But you may believe me, In giving, he's so jealous of you— Indeed so envious—each reward from God That in the world is promised, he would Rather earn for himself alone. And therefore he will lend to none, that he May always have wherewith to give ; And further, because charity is ordered in the law. Obligingness, however, is not so ordered, Thus charity itself makes him the least Obliging man in all the world. 'Tis true of late I've had some variance With him ; but do not think on that account I would do him injustice. He's good for all—but for that, not ; Indeed, indeed, for that he's not. But I Will go and knock at other doors. . . . And Now it just occurs to me there is a Moor Rich and avaricious. I go ; I go.

Sittah.

What is your hurry, Hafi ?

Saladin.

Leave him alone. Leave him alone.

THIRD SCENE.

SITTAH *and SALADIN.**Sittah.*

He's off, as if he gladly would escape us.
What can it mean? Has he really been deceived
in Nathan?
Or will he rather us deceive?

Saladin.

How? Thou askest me?
I scarcely know of whom you spoke,
And of your Jew, your Nathan,
Hear I for the first time this day.

Sittah.

Can it be possible the man can be
Unknown to thee? of whom 'tis said
That he the tombs of David and of Solomon
Hath well explored, and knows a
Secret, potent word, which makes their
Seals unloose, and so from time
To time, he brings to light treasures incalculable,
Which could be yielded by no meaner source.

Saladin.

If this man hath his riches from the tombs,
It is not from the tombs of David or of Solomon;
For in such tombs lie only fools.

Sittah.

Or villains !

Besides, the fountain of his wealth is much more
copious, more inexhaustible
Than even a tomb with pelf o'erfilled.

Saladin.

Then he's a merchant, as I heard.

Sittah.

His beasts of burden tread on every road,
And cross o'er every desert ; in every harbour
Lie his ships. That has Al-Hafi formerly
Himself proclaimed ; and, with enthusiasm filled,
He added—how great, how noble this his
Friend, who well employed that which he was not
'shamed

To have earned by prudence and by diligence.
And further said, how free from prejudice
His mind, how open to all virtue was his heart,
And in accord with every beauty.

Saladin.

And now Al-Hafi spoke so uncertainly,
Indeed, almost so coldly of him.

Sittah.

Well not so coldly, but embarrassed,
As if it dangerous seemed to praise him.

And yet he would not blame him undeservedly.
Why? Or, is it really possible that even
The foremost of his folk can from his folk
Not quite emancipate himself? that really
Hafi had from this standpoint, to feel
Shame for his friend. But be that as it may,
Let this Jew be a Jew in more or less degree,
Is he but rich, that is enough for us.

Saladin.

Yet surely sister, thou must not take
By force that which is his alone.

Sittah.

Ah, what mean'st *thou* by force?—
Fire and sword? No, no! No other force
Is for the weak required than their
Own weaknesses. But for the present
Come in to my harem, and hear
A songstress I bought just yesterday.
Meantime a plot which I've devised against
This Nathan, may ripen yet with me. Come along.

FOURTH SCENE.

Before Nathan's House, where it adjoins the Palms.

RECHA and NATHAN coming out, DAJA afterwards joins them.

Recha.

You've been very long, dear father. I fear
You'll scarcely find him now.

Nathan.

Well, well !

If no longer here under the palms,
I'll see him elsewhere. Be but calm now.
Look, yonder comes Daja to us.

Recha.

She'll certainly have lost him.

Nathan.

Oh, likely not.

Recha.

Otherwise she would come more quickly.

Nathan.

But then she has not seen us yet

Recha.

Now sees she us,

Nathan.

And hastens her steps. Look ! but do keep calm—
calm.

Recha.

Would you indeed desire a daughter who
In this case could be calm ? and be
Quite unconcerned at one, whose kindness
Saved her life—a life that's doubly
Dear to her, for that she owes it you ?

Nathan.

Indeed, I would not have thee other than thou art,
Even did I know thy heart
Were stirred by something different.

Recha.

What, my father ?

Nathan.

Askest thou me ? and playest the bashful one with
me ?

What stirs thy heart is innocence and nature ;
Let it not give thee care. For me,
It gives me none. This only promise ;
Promise me that when thy heart
More unmistakably hath spoken, thou
Wilt conceal no single wish from me.

Recha.

The bare idea that I should from you
My heart conceal but makes me tremble.

Nathan.

No more of this. It now is settled
Once and for all. There's Daja ! Well ?

Daja.

He's walking still beneath the palms, and
Will come round the wall directly. See
There he comes.

Recha.

Ah ! He seems uncertain whither,
If further on, or back ; if right, or left.

Daja.

No, no ! He makes his way oft round
The cloister, and so must pass this way.
What wager you ?

Recha.

Right, right. Have you spoken to him ?
And what is his mood to-day ?

Daja.

As always.

Nathan.

Now stand so that he sees you not.
Step further back, or better, go quick into the house.

Recha.

Only another look—ah, the hedge
Hath stolen him from me.

Daja.

Come, come, your father's right ; you
Run the risk that he'll at once
Turn back if he discover you.

Recha.

Oh that hedge !

Nathan.

And if he comes out suddenly from
Behind it, he cannot otherwise, he
Must discover you ; therefore pray go.

Daja.

Come, come ; I know a window
Whence we can see them easily.

Recha.

Yes ? [Both go in.

F

FIFTH SCENE.

NATHAN—soon joined by the TEMPLAR.

Nathan.

I almost shrink from this strange being,
And almost feel perplexed by his rough virtue ;
Why should one man have the power to make
Another so embarrassed ? Ha ! here he comes,
And by my God, a manly youth ; I like him well—
The clear, bold look, the noble bearing.
'Tis but the shell that can be bitter,
The kernel I trow, is not.
Where else now, have I seen his like ?
Forgive me, noble Frank——

Templar.

What?

Nathan.

Permit me——

Templar.

What, Jew ? What ?

Nathan.

That I presume to speak to you.

Templar.

Can I prevent it ? Only be brief.

NATHAN AND THE TEMPLAR—

Ha! here he comes,
And, by my God, a manly youth ; I like him well.
ACT ii., SCENE 5.

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Act II

SCENE V

Nathan.

Pray pardon me ; and do not with such haughty
Scorn, pass hastily by a man,
You have for ever made your debtor.

Templar.

How so ? Ah, I almost guess ; you are—

Nathan.

My name is Nathan. I'm father of the maid,
Whom from the fire thy bravery saved,
And come—

Templar.

If to thank me—stop. I've had
To endure too many thanks, for this mere trifle ;
Besides, you owe me absolutely nought.
How could I know she was your daughter ?
It is the Templar's duty to rush to aid
The first—the best—whose need he sees ;
Further, my life was weary to me at that moment,
And gladly, gladly did I seize the chance,
To throw it on the balance for another's,
Even tho' it were the life but of a Jewish girl.

Nathan.

Great—great and detestable ; yet this version
May also be explained : for modest greatness
Behind the detestable seeks shelter,

In order to escape unwelcome admiration.
But if this greatness with scorn rejects the
Offering of admiration, what offering would
Be less distasteful, Knight? Were
You not captive and a stranger here, I would
Not so directly ask. But say—command;
In what way can I serve you?

Templar.

You? in none.

Nathan.

I am a wealthy man.

Templar.

The richer Jew was ne'er to me the better Jew.

Nathan.

Can you not use then, that
Which nevertheless, he better has?
Can you not use his riches?

Templar.

Well—good. I will not quite deny you that—
I'll not deny you for my mantle's sake;
As soon as it is worn to tatters, and not a
Stitch nor shred will hold together, I'll come
And borrow from you gold to buy, or cloth to make
Another. But don't look troubled,

You're safe a while ; it's long ere it will come to that.
You see the mantle is in good condition, only
At one corner there's a nasty spot, where it is singed,
And that it got whilst through the fire I bore your
daughter.

Nathan

(*who seizes the corner and looks earnestly at it*).

It's strange indeed, that such an ugly spot—
That such a scar bears better witness of
The man, than his own mouth ; ah, I could
Kiss the spot. Forgive me, that was not intended.

Templar.

What ?

Nathan.

A tear fell on it.

Templar.

That cannot hurt it ; it's borne drops enough.

Aside (This Jew begins to soften and perplex me).

Nathan.

Would you but be so good as send this mantle
To my daughter?

Templar.

And why ?

Nathan.

That she may press her lips upon this spot,
For to embrace your knees she wishes now in vain.

Templar.

But Jew,—your name is Nathan ?
But Nathan—you—you speak well—
Most pointedly. I am affected—certainly—
I would have—

Nathan.

Feign and dissemble as you will,
I find you out even here. You were too good
And noble, to be more polite. The maid
All feeling, her attendant woman
All obedience, her father far away—
You were too careful for her good name,
And fled rather than try her ;
Fled in order not to conquer ; and
Therefore further must I thank you.

Templar.

I must confess, you know how Templars ought
To think.

Nathan.

Only Templars? only ought? and only that
The order so commands? I know how good men
think,
And know that every land brings forth good men.

Templar.

But with a difference, I hope ?

Nathan.

Well yes ; in dress and colour and in stature.

Templar.

Though here oft more, oft less than there.

Nathan.

No ; there is not so much in that.

The *great man* everywhere needs room ;
And several, when too closely planted, break
But the branches. But average men, as we,
Are all over found in crowds.

Yet without charity, let no one treat the other.
Let still the gnarl with the stump agree,
And let the top not bear itself,
As if it alone had never sprouted from the earth.

Templar.

Well said ; yet you must know
The folk, who first indulged in the disparagement of
man.

Know you Nathan, the folk who first proclaimed
themselves
The Lord's elect ? How then, if I cannot
Myself restrain from hating this same folk ?

And for their pride despising them ?
 This pride the Christian and Mahomedan
 Have heired, that their God is the only true one.
 You're struck that I, a Christian and a Templar,
 So speak. When has the pious frenzy the best
 God to own,
 And this best God to force on all,
 Been more apparent in its blackest form
 Than here, than now ?
 And now, from whose eyes fall the scales ?
 Oh, be he blind who will ; forget
 What I have said and leave me. [*Departing.*]

Nathan.

Ah, now you know not how much more firmly
 I'll force myself upon you.
 Come now, we must indeed be friends.
 Despise my folk deep as you will,
 For neither of us hath chosen his folk.
 Are we our folk ? What means the word ?
 Are Jews and Christians—rather Christians
 And Jews—then men ? Ah, if I've
 But found in you another, of whom
 It is enough to say—he is a *man* !

Templar.

Yes Nathan ; yes, by Heavens you have !
 Your hand. I am ashamed to have mistaken you
 A single moment.

Nathan.

And I am proud of it.

In the *Common* only is one mistaken seldom.

Templar.

And the *Uncommon* hardly is forgotten.

Yes Nathan, yes ; we must, we must be friends.

Nathan.

We are already. How Recha will rejoice at this.

And ah, what a most joyous prospect

Opens before my gaze. Do you but know her !

Templar.

I burn with eagerness. Who rushes from

Your house ? Is it not Daja ?

Nathan.

Yes, and so anxiously.

Templar.

Sure naught has happened to our Recha ?

SIXTH SCENE.

The foregoing, with DAJA hurrying.

Daja.

Nathan ! Nathan !

Nathan.

Well ?

Daja.

Pardon me, noble knight, that I must interrupt you.

Nathan.

Well, what is it ?

Templar.

What is it ?

Daja.

Saladin has sent—the Sultan
Desires to speak with you. My God,
The Sultan !

Nathan.

With me ? The Sultan ? He will be curious
To see the novelties I've brought.
Send word that little, indeed that nought's un-
packed.

Daja.

No, no ! He does not wish to see your
Goods, but to speak with you—you,
In person ; and soon—as soon as possible.

Nathan.

I'll come. Now, you return—pray go.

Daja.

Don't be offended, noble knight,
But—God, we're so perplexed. Whatever
Can the Sultan want !

Nathan.

That will soon be seen—and now, pray go.

SEVENTH SCENE.

NATHAN and the TEMPLAR.

Templar.

Then don't you know him ? I mean personally.

Nathan.

Saladin ? not yet. I've not avoided,
Nor have sought to know him.
The general report spoke much too well

Of him, so I preferred to take, rather on faith,
Than sight. But now,—if it is otherwise,—
By the sparing of your life he has—

Templar.

Yes ; that is at all events the case.
The life I have was given by him.

Nathan.

Through which he has given me a double, ay,
A treble life. This incident alone has altered
All between us, and thrown a cord around me,
Which binds me for ever to his service.
Scarcely can I guess indeed what he will now
At first command ; but I'm prepared for all,
Besides prepared to tell him, 'tis for
Your sake that I do it.

Templar.

I've ne'er been able to give him thanks,
However oft I've met him. The impression
Which I made upon him appeared so suddenly,
And just as suddenly it disappeared. Who knows
indeed,
If even he remembers me ; and yet he must—
At least must once, when he has
Finally to decide my fate. 'Tis not enough
I live by his command—yea by his will—
From him I also must expect the word,
Whose will I must obey in living.

Nathan.

Just so—and therefore all the more I'll hurry
To him. Perhaps a word may drop
To give me opportunity to speak of you.
Excuse me now that I make haste,
But when may we expect you with us ?

Templar.

Soon as permitted.

Nathan.

Soon as you will.

Templar.

To-day, then.

Nathan.

And may I ask your name ?

Templar.

My name was—is, Kurd von Stauffen—Kurd.

Nathan.

Von Stauffen? Stauffen? Stauffen?

Templar.

Why should that name strike you so ?

Nathan.

Von Stauffen ! Doubtless there are many of that
family.

Templar.

Why yes, indeed. Here were—here
Moulder many generations of them—
My uncle even—I mean my father.
But wherefore do you fix your look,
More and more sharply on me.

Nathan.

Oh nothing, nothing ! How can
I weary looking at you.

Templar.

And therefore will I leave you first. The seeker's
Look hath often found more than it wished.
I fear it Nathan. Let time and
Let not curiosity, cement our friendship. [He goes.]

Nathan.

"The seeker hath right often found
More than he wished." It is as if he read my soul.
Yes, verily ; and that may happen here.
He has Wolf's build ; his gait, also his voice ;
And so, exactly so, tossed Wolf his head—so carried
Wolf his sword beneath his arm—and so
Stroked Wolf his eyebrows with his hand,
So as to shade the lightning of his glance.
'Tis strange how such impressions deep at times
May sleep within us, until a word or sound

Awakens them. Von Stauffen !
Quite so, quite so. Filneck and Stauffen.
I'll presently know more exactly—yes, presently ;
But first to Saladin. But how ?
Is not that Daja waiting ? Well, come
Nearer, Daja.

EIGHTH SCENE.

DAJA—NATHAN.

Nathan.

Well, what's the matter ? I am sure the hearts of
Both of you are breaking to learn from me
Something quite different from what the Sultan
wishes.

Daja.

And can you blame her. Saladin's messenger
Scared us from the window just as you'd begun
To speak more confidentially.

Nathan.

So tell her he may come at any moment.

Daja.

Indeed ? indeed ?

Nathan.

And Daja, I hope I can rely on you.
Be on your guard, I pray you ; you will not regret it,
And even your conscience will have profit by it.
So do not thwart me in my plans.
Reply and ask with modesty and with reserve.

Daja.

You need not tell me that, indeed. I go,
But pray go you also, for see, there comes—
I do believe—a second messenger from Saladin ;
Al-Hafi, your Dervish.

NINTH SCENE.

NATHAN—AL-HAFI.

Al-Hafi.

Ah, ha ! I was just coming back to you.

Nathan.

Is there such haste ? What does he want of me ?

Al-Hafi.

Who ?

Nathan.

Saladin. I'm coming, I'm coming.

Al-Hafî.

To whom? to Saladin?

Nathan.

Did Saladin not send you?

Al-Hafî.

Me? no! Has he sent for you?

Nathan.

Indeed he has.

Al-Hafî.

Well now, that's right.

Nathan.

What? what's right?

Al-Hafî.

That— It's not my fault;
God knows, 'tis not my fault. What have
I not said and lied about you, just to avert it.

Nathan.

To avert what? And what is right?

G

Al-Hafî.

That you are now become his treasurer.
 I pity you ; but I will not behold it—
 I leave this very hour—this you have heard already,
 And you know whither, and the road.
 Have you commands in that direction ? if so,
 I'm at your service. It must, however, be
 No more than what a naked man can carry—
 I'm off ; so pray speak quickly.

Nathan.

Collect yourself, Al-Hafî, collect yourself ;
 I really do know nothing.
 What are you talking of ?

Al-Hafî.

You'll bring the treasure with you though ?

Nathan.

Treasure ?

Al-Hafî.

Well ; the money which you're to lend to Saladin.

Nathan.

And that is all ?

Al-Hafî.

How could I look on and see, how day by day
 He scoops you out, even to your toes ?

How could I look on and see, how prodigality
Borrows so long from the ne'er empty barns
Of his liberality—and borrows, borrows ; till
At last the very mouse born in the place must
Die of hunger. Perhaps you think that he
Who needs your money, will likewise take
Your counsel ? Humph—he follow counsel !
When has the Sultan followed counsel ?
Just fancy, Nathan, how even now he treated me.

Nathan.

Well ?

Al-Hafî.

I came to him as he was with his sister
Playing chess. Sittah plays well, and
A game which Saladin thought he had lost,
And given up, stood still intact.
I watched it closely, and soon saw that it
Was far from lost.

Nathan.

That was a prize for you.

Al-Hafî.

He'd but to move the king behind the pawn
Upon her check. If I could only show it you——

Nathan.

Oh, I take your word.

Al-Hafī.

Then the rook attacked, and she was lost.
All that I would explain to him, and called him.
Now fancy——

Nathan.

He did not share your view?

Al-Hafī.

Not even listened to me ; but scornfully
Threw the pieces all together.

Nathan.

Is it possible?

Al-Hafī.

And said, he would be mated ;
Would be ! Call you that playing ?

Nathan.

Well hardly ; would rather call it playing at play.

Al-Hafī.

Altho' the stakes were no deaf nuts.

Nathan.

Money here or there is little ;
But not to listen on a point
Of such importance—not even to listen,
Nor admire your eagle glance—well,
That cries for revenge.

Al-Hafî.

Ah well ; I only tell it you,
That you may see what kind of man he is.
In short, I cannot stand it longer. Here
I must run to every dirty Moor, and beg of him
To lend to Saladin—I, who for myself have
Never begged, must now for others borrow.
Borrowing is little else than begging, and
Lending with such usury is but a short remove
From stealing. Amongst my Gebers on the
Ganges' banks I neither am in need, nor need to be
The instrument of both for others.
There on the Ganges, on the Ganges only,
Are there men. Of all here, you alone
Are worthy to live upon the Ganges' banks ;
Won't you come with me ? Leave him
Your hoard ; 'tis it he wants : he'll
Bring you to it at the last. Then were
An end put to the drudgery.
I'll get you a staff—oh come ; pray, come.

Nathan.

I thought, good friend, that was our last
Resource ; but I'll consider it, Al-Hafi,
Wait—

Al-Hafi.

Consider it ! No ; such plan needs not to be con-
sidered.

Nathan.

Only until I've seen the Sultan—
Until I've taken leave—

Al-Hafi.

He who considers does but motives seek
Not to proceed; who on a sudden can't
Decide to live himself, must even live
The slave of others ; but as you will.
Farewell—even as you will—my way lies yonder ;
Yours lies there.

Nathan.

Al-Hafi, you will at least first settle your affairs.

Al-Hafi.

Oh, nonsense ; the value of my cash
Is not worth counting, and for my accounts
Must you or Sittah be security. [Off.]

Nathan.

I'll stand your security—wild, noble, good—

What shall I call you?

The true beggar after all is—indeed,

The true and only king.

[*Goes off from the other side.*

THIRD ACT.

FIRST SCENE.

Scene in Nathan's House—RECHA and DAJA.

Recha.

What did my father Daja, really say ?—
“ That he might come at any moment.”
That sounds indeed, as if at once
He would appear. And yet how many moments
are already past !
Ah well, who thinks on moments that are gone ;
I'll only live now in the coming one,
For after all, that moment must arrive which
brings him here.

Daja.

Oh, that disgusting message from the Sultan !
As but for it, Nathan had certainly
Then brought him hither.

Recha.

And when that moment comes,
And my most earnest warmest wishes
Have been gratified—What then? What then?

Daja.

What then! Why then, I hope
The warmest of *my* warmest wishes, will
Also hasten to fulfilment.

Recha.

What then will take that place within my breast,
Which has already learned without a ruling
Passion not to beat? It may be *nothing*;
The mere thought makes me tremble.

Daja.

My wish will then take up the place of yours
Already satisfied; yes mine, my wish
To see you safe in Europe, in hands
Quite worthy of you.

Recha.

You're wrong, because the very feeling
Which makes that wish yours, makes it impossible
e'er to be mine.
Your Fatherland attracts *you* to it,
And shall not *mine* retain *me* here;

And can the image of *your* native land,
 Which in *your* heart is uneffaced,
 Be yet more powerful than what *I* see
 And hear and hold of *mine*.

Daja.

You may defend you as you will—
 The ways of Heaven are Heaven's ways.
 If now he whose strong arm saved you,
 Were the means his God employed—
 His God for whom he fights—
 To bear you to the land, and to the people,
 To whom indeed you have been born.

Recha.

Hear Daja, how again you talk ;
 You have, dear Daja, very strange ideas—
 “ His God for whom he fights ! ”
 To whom then doth God appertain ?

 What kind of God is that, which to a man belongs ?
 Who also needs a man to fight for Him ?
 And then who knows for what spot of earth one has
 been born,
 If it be not for that which gave him birth ?
 What would my father say if he but heard you,
 Always to me depicting fortune
 As far from him as possible ?
 What would he say if he but saw

How eagerly you seek to mix the weeds,
Or flowers of your own faith amongst the seed of
 reason,
Which he has sown so pure within my soul ?
My dear dear Daja, he simply will not have
Thy brightly coloured flowers within my ground.
And I must also own to you,
I feel myself my ground so weakened
And exhausted by your flowers,
However beautifully you clothe it with them,
That in their fragrance—in their sour-sweet
 fragrance—
I feel that which stupefies, and makes me dizzy.
Your brain is more accustomed to them.
I do not blame the stronger nerves
Which so can deal with them : such are not mine.
Thy angel had already made me foolish,
And I, in presence of my father, am still
Ashamed about the farce.

Daja.

Farce indeed ! As if pure reason only
Were at home within this house. Farce indeed !
Oh, if I but dared to speak.

Recha.

And dare you not ? When was I not all attention,
Whene'er you pleased to entertain me
With the stories of the great heroes of your creed ?

Have I not always rendered admiration
To their deeds, and to their suffering tears?
Their creed, indeed, ne'er seemed their most heroic
part;

Yet so much more consoling was the thought,
That loyalty to God did not depend
So absolutely on our fancies of Him.

Dear Daja, my father has so often told us that;
And you yourself so often have agreed with him.
Why will you then alone seek to undermine
What you with him have built?
Dear Daja, this is no conversation
With which we best may meet our friend.
For me, indeed—yes—for me much does depend
upon it.

If also he—

Hark, Daja, is no one at the door?
If it were really he! Hark!

SECOND SCENE.

*RECHA, DAJA, and the TEMPLAR, to whom some
one from outside opens the door saying—*

Pray enter here.

Recha

(Starts, recovers herself, and would fall at his feet).

'Tis he, my rescuer—ah!

Templar.

Only to avoid this scene have I delayed
So long my visit ; and yet—

Recha.

I will, even at this proud man's feet,
Give thanks once more to God—not to the man.
The man will have no thanks—will have as little
As the water buckets, which showed themselves
So busy in the fire's extinction.
They let themselves be filled, then emptied ;
Nothing to you or me. Even so the man.
He also was pushed somehow into the flames,
And then I fell into his arms ; and there
I somehow then remained, just as a spark
Might do upon his mantle, until again
I know not how, we both were thrown out of the
flames.

Where are then the grounds for thanks ?
In Europe wine alone leads men to deeds
Even more difficult. The Templars are obliged,
Indeed, in this way to act.
They are obliged somewhat, though slightly better,
Like well-trained dogs, to carry out of fire as out of
water.

Templar (who gazes upon her the whole time with astonishment and restlessness).

Oh Daja Daja, if in moments of chagrin and bile
My cross-grained mood addressed you harshly,

Why yet report each foolish word that from my Tongue escaped. That, Daja, is revenge too hard ; Yet if in future you'll but represent me better to her.

Daja.

Well knight, I think these little stings, Put in her heart, have not been to your disadvantage.

Recha.

How—were you in trouble—and with that trouble Were much more niggardly than with your life ?

Templar.

Good noble maid, how is my soul
'Twixt eye and ear divided ;
But this is not the maid ; no, no !
It is not she whom I saved from the fire.
For who had known her, and not rushed
To rescue her ? or who had waited till I came ?
Indeed, disguised by fright——

[*Pause, during which he is lost in contemplation of her.*]

Recha.

And yet I find you still the same.

[*A similar pause until she resumes and tries to arouse him out of his abstraction.*]

Now knight, pray tell us where you've been
So long? I might indeed inquire, where
Are you now?

Templar.

I am—— Perhaps where I ought not to be.

Recha.

Where have you been? also perhaps where
You ought not? That is not good.

Templar.

On—on—what is that mountain called?
On Sinai.

Recha.

On Sinai? Well now, that is fortunate,
For now at last I'll learn reliably,
If it be true——

Templar.

What, what?

If it be true that still the spot is visible,
Where Moses stood before Jehovah, where——

Recha.

Well no; not that. Where'er he stood,
He stood before Jehovah; and of all that,
I know enough already. But I would like
To know from you, if it be true that

It's less difficult to ascend this mountain
Than come down ; because, so far
As I have mountains climbed, I've found it just the
opposite.
Well knight? What? you turn away
And will not look at me?

Templar.

Because I wish to hear you.

Recha.

Because you don't wish me to see
You smile at my simplicity ;
You smile that of this mountain—the holiest of all—
I cannot ask something of more interest.
Is it not so?

Templar.

So I must meet your eyes again—but why,
You close them now? and now suppress your smile
How I just now would read in movements of you
features—
In doubtful movements—what I so clearly hear—
What you so clearly to me said—and you are silent
Ah, Recha, Recha! How truly did he say
“Do you but only know her.”

Recha.

Who said that to you, and of whom?

Templar.

"Do you but only know her," said your father to me,
And said of you.

Daja.

Did not I also—did I not indeed?

Templar.

But where is he then? Where is your father?
Is he still with Saladin?

Recha.

Doubtless is he.

Templar.

Still, still there? Oh how forgetful am I.
There can he hardly be—but most certainly
Awaits me by the abbey. I think we so arranged.
Excuse me, I will go and bring him.

Daja.

That be my mission.
Stay knight, stay, I'll bring him here immediately.

Templar.

No, no; he is expecting me, not you.
Besides, he easily could— Who knows?
Could easily by the Sultan—
You do not know the Sultan—could easily
Have come into difficulty. Believe me,
There is danger if I do not go.

H

Recha.

Danger? for whom?

Templar.

Danger for me—for you—for him—
If I don't go, and go immediately.

[Goes.]

THIRD SCENE.

RECHA and DAJA.

Recha.

What means that, Daja? So quickly gone?
What's come to him? What has occurred to him?
What sent him off?

Daja.

Leave him, just leave him; I think it is
No evil sign.

Recha.

Sign? of what?

Daja.

That something's going on within him.
It boils and yet must not boil over.
Leave him but alone. How is it with you?

Recha.

What is with me? You do become to me
As incomprehensible as he.

Daja.

Now you will soon be able to repay him,
All the restlessness he caused to you.
But be I pray, not too severe—
Do not be too vindictive.

Recha.

Well, you may know yourself of what you speak.

Daja.

And are you already then again so calm ?

Recha.

That am I. Yes indeed, I am—

Daja.

Confess at least, that you are glad at his unrest—
And thank it for the calm you now enjoy.

Recha.

Of that I'm quite unconscious ; but what at most
I can confess is, that I wonder much myself,
How after such a storm within my heart
So great a calm so suddenly could follow.
His countenance, his speech, and bearing, have—

Daja.

Already satisfied you ?

Recha.

Satisfied ! I will not say. No ! not by far.

Daja.

Only stilled the craving hunger.

Recha.

Well yes ; if you will have it so.

Daja.

I ? no not I.

Recha.

He will aye be dear to me ; yes,
 Even dearer than my life, although my pulse
 No longer at his very name may change,
 And at the thought of him my heart no longer,
 Stronger and faster beat. How I chatter.
 Come, come dear Daja, let's to the window
 That overlooks the palms.

Daja.

So is the craving hunger after all
 Not yet quite stilled.

Recha.

Well, I would only see the palms again,
 Not him beneath them.

Daja.

This coldness but denotes the coming
 Of another fever.

Recha.

What coldness? I am indeed not cold;
But I do not less gladly see, what I
With calmness look upon.

FOURTH SCENE.

An audience-room in the palace of the Sultan.

SALADIN and SITTAH.

Saladin (at the entrance beside the door).

Here, bring the Jew to me, soon as he comes.
It seems indeed he does not over-hurry.

Sittah.

He was most likely absent at the time,
Could not be found at once.

Saladin.

Oh, sister—sister!

Sittah.

You act as if a struggle were before you.

Saladin.

Yes, and with arms I have not learned to wield,
I must dissemble and be apprehensive;
I must lay snares, and lead upon the ice.
Where have I learned this slippery art?

Where have I practised it?—and wherefore must I do all this?

Wherefore? To fish up gold—gold from A Jew to extort by fear. For gold, To such small tricks have I at last been brought, In order to obtain the least of littlenesses.

Sittah.

Each littleness, dear brother, if despised May yet avenge itself.

Saladin.

Alas! too true; and if now this same Jew Should be the good and gifted man; Such as the Dervish once depicted him.

Sittah.

Oh then, there will be no necessity; The snare is laid but for the avaricious Grasping Jew, not for the good man and The wise. Such an one is ours already Without snares; and then the pleasure to hear How such a man can use excuse, With what bold strength he Either tears the cords to pieces, or else With cunning prudence, turns the net aside; I say that pleasure you enjoy besides.

Saladin.

Well, that is true, and that I certainly am glad of.

Sittah.

And nothing further can disturb you ;
For if he be but one out of the crowd,
Be but a Jew like other Jews, you
Certainly need not be ashamed, to seem
What he believes all men to be ;
For he who shows himself a better man
Seems to the Jew a dupe and fool.

Saladin.

So then I must act badly,
So that the bad think not badly of me.

Sittah.

Yes in truth, if you dealing badly
Call it, to use each thing according to its kind.

Saladin.

Whate'er a woman's wit conceives,
That she is sure to palliate.

Sittah.

To palliate !

Saladin.

The fine and pointed coil that I must weave
Breaks in my awkward hand ;
Such must be handled as it is invented,

With sharpness and dexterity. Yet come
What come may, I'll dance just as I can,
And most likely rather worse than better.

Sittah.

Trust only not yourself too little.
I'll guarantee you, if you do but will it ;
For men like you try to persuade us,
'Tis but their swords—their swords alone—
Have brought them their success.
The lion, frankly speaking, is ashamed
At hunting in the fox's company—
Ashamed not of the cunning, but of the company.

Saladin.

You women would so gladly draw
Us men down to your level ; but
Go, now go, I think I've got my lesson.

Sittah.

What ! I must go ?

Saladin.

You surely don't seek to remain ?

Sittah.

If not here within your presence,
At least there in the ante-room.

Saladin.

To overhear us sister? not even that
If I may so insist. Away, away—
The curtain rustles—he is come; and that you
Do not stay I will look after you.

[*As she goes out at one door Nathan enters by the other, while Saladin has seated himself.*

FIFTH SCENE.

SALADIN and NATHAN.

Saladin.

Come nearer, Jew, still nearer;
Come quite here, and without fear.

Nathan.

Let fear be for your foes.

Saladin.

Your name is Nathan?

Nathan.

Yes.

Saladin.

Nathan the Wise?

Nathan.

No.

Saladin.

Well, you may not give yourself that name,
The people do.

Nathan.

Maybe, the people——

Saladin.

You don't believe I think contemptuously
Of the people's voice? I long have wished
To know the man, whom it pronounces wise.

Nathan.

And if it does so but in mockery?
If wise meant to the people naught but prudent,
And prudent only he who understood
His own advantage well?

Saladin.

Of course, you mean his *true* advantage.

Nathan.

Then, truly, the most selfish were the most prudent,
And wise and prudent were the same.

Saladin.

I hear you proving what you would deny;
Man's true advantage, which the people know not,
Is well known to you—at least you've sought to
learn it—
Have earnestly pondered thereupon, and
That alone indeed, makes the true wise man.

Nathan.

Which each one thinks himself to be.

Saladin.

We've had enough of modesty, for to hear it always,
And it alone, where dry pure reason is expected,
Doth but annoy. [*Springs up.*] Let's come to
business;
But mind Jew, be sincere—sincere.

Nathan.

Sultan, I will strive to serve you, so as
To be worthy of your further custom.

Saladin.

Serve me? How?

Nathan.

You shall have the best of what I have,
And at the lowest price.

Saladin.

What are you speaking of? Surely not of your
merchandise?
My sister will bargain with you there [Eh, she's
listening],
But with the merchant I have nought to do.

Nathan.

Then doubtless you would wish to know,
What on my way I've seen or ascertained about
The enemy, who certainly again are moving?
If I may openly—

Saladin.

— Nor yet indeed for that do I require you.
I know all that already, know at least enough.
In brief—

Nathan.

Sultan, command !

Saladin.

I require your aid in something different—
Something quite different. Because I find
You are so wise, I wish to ask you openly,
To what faith or to what law, do you
Most owe your great enlightenment ?

Nathan.

Sultan, I am a Jew !

Saladin.

And I Mohammedan. The Christian is between us.
One only of these three can be the true religion.
A man like you remains not
Where the mere accident of birth has thrown him ;
Or, if he so remains, remains from insight,
Proofs, choice of the best. Well now,
Inform me of your insight. Let me hear the proofs
Which want of time hath hindered me myself
To search for ; and, in strict confidence
Tell me the choice which these proofs have deter-
mined,

That I may make it mine. How? You're startled,
And weigh me with your eyes? It may well be
I'm the first Sultan who has felt such cares,
Which are however, as it seems to me,
Not quite unworthy of a Sultan's thought.
Is it not so? So speak and tell me, or
Will you have a moment to reflect? Good;
I give it you. [I wonder if she's listening.
I will surprise her, and then hear
If I have done it well.] Now think—think quickly:
'Twill not be long ere I return.

[*He goes into the ante-room, where Sittah had already gone.*

SIXTH SCENE.

Nathan.

H'm, h'm! 'Tis strange. Where am I?
What would the Sultan? Yes what would he?
I came prepared with gold; he wishes truth,
Truth, and will have it pure and bright, as if
The truth were coin—ay, old world money,
Which had been weighed and tested. That might
do indeed,
But such new coin known only by the stamp—
That is paid down at once. That is it not!

Can one put truth into the human head like gold
into a bag ?
 Who then is here the Jew ? He or I ?
 Yet why ? May he indeed not ask for truth, in truth ?
 Indeed the doubt that he should ask for truth
 Just for a snare, would be too paltry—too paltry ?
 What's too paltry for the great ?
 Too paltry ? Yes, yes. He rushed into the house
 so rashly !
 One knocks and listens when he comes as friend.
 I must be on my guard. And how ? and how ?
 To be so perfectly the downright Jew
 Will never do. And yet to be no Jew at all,
 Will do still less. For if no Jew,
He well might ask, why not Mohammedan ?—
 That's it, and that can save me.
 Not children only can with tales be satisfied.
 He's coming. Let him come.

SEVENTH SCENE.

SALADIN and NATHAN.

Saladin.

[So the field's now clear.] I have not come
 Too quickly for you ? You've finished your reflec-
 tion ?
 Well then, speak ; we're heard by not a single soul.

Nathan.

I would, indeed, the whole world might hear.

Saladin.

So sure is Nathan of his task?

Ah, that I call a sage—the truth ne'er to conceal;
For it to venture all upon the cast—
Life and body, goods and blood.

Nathan.

Yes, yes, when necessary, and of use.

Saladin.

From this forthwith I now may hope
With better right to bear one of my titles,
Improver of the World and of the Law.

Nathan.

In sooth a splendid title. But, Sultan,
Ere I trust myself completely to you,
Will you permit me to relate a narrative?

Saladin.

Why not? I've aye been partial to a tale well-told.

Nathan.

Ah, "well-told" is not quite my forte!

Saladin.

Again so proudly modest. Go on, relate, relate.

Nathan.

In days of yore a man lived in the East,
 Who owned a ring of marvellous worth,
 Given to him by a hand beloved.
 The stone was opal, and shed a hundred lovely rays,
 But chiefly it possessed the secret power
 To make the owner loved of God and man,
 If he but wore it in this faith and confidence ;
 What wonder then that this man in the East
 Ne'er from his finger took the ring,
 And so arranged it should for ever with his house
 remain,
 Namely, thus :—He bequeathed it to
 The most belovèd of his sons,
 Firmly prescribing that he in turn
 Should leave it to the dearest of his sons ;
 And always thus the dearest, without respect to
 birth,
 Became the head and chieftain of the house
 By virtue of the ring alone.
 You understand me, Sultan ?

Saladin.

I understand. Proceed.

Nathan.

The ring, descending thus from son to son,
 Came to the father of three sons at last,
 All three of whom obeyed him equally,

And all of whom he therefore loved alike.
From time to time indeed, now one seemed worthest of the ring,
And now another, now the third,
Just as it happened one or other with him were alone,
And his o'erflowing heart was not divided with the other two ;
And so to each one of the three he gave
The promise—in pious weakness done—
He should possess the wondrous ring.
This then went on long as it could ;
But then at last it came to dying,
Which brings the father into sore perplexity.
It pains him much to practise such deceit
Upon two sons who rested so upon his word.
What can be done ? In secret
He seeks out a skilful artist,
And from him orders yet two other rings,
Just to the pattern of his own,
And urges him to spare neither pains nor gold,
To make a perfect match.
The artist so succeeded in his task,
That, when he brought the jewels home,
The father even failed to tell which was the pattern ring.
Now, glad and joyous, he calls his sons—
But separately of course,—gives each
A special blessing with his ring, and dies.
You hear me Sultan ?

Saladin

(*Who, somewhat moved, turns from him.*)

I hear, I hear ;
But pray get ended with your tale.
You soon will be ?

Nathan.

I'm at the end,
For what still follows is self-understood.
Scarce was the father dead,
When each one with his ring appears
Claiming each the headship of the house.
Inspections, quarrelling, and complaints ensue ;
But all in vain, the veritable ring
Was not distinguishable,—

[*After a pause, during which he expects
the Sultan's answer.*]

Almost as indistinguishable as to us,
Is now—the true religion.

Saladin.

What? Is that meant as answer to my question ?

Nathan.

'Tis meant but to excuse myself, because
I lack the boldness to discriminate between the
rings,
Which the father by express intent had made
So that they might not be distinguished.

Saladin.

The rings ! Don't play with me.
I thought the faiths which I have named
Were easily distinguishable,
Even to their raiment, even to meat and drink.

Nathan.

But yet not as regards their proofs ;
For do not all rest upon history, written or traditional ?
And history can also be accepted
Only on faith and trust. Is it not so ?
Now, whose faith and confidence do we least
misdoubt ?
That of our relatives ? Of those whose flesh and
blood we are,
Of those who from our childhood
Have lavished on us proofs of love,
Who ne'er deceived us, unless 'twere wholesome for
us so ?
How can I place less faith in my forefathers
Than you in yours ? or the reverse ?
Can I desire of you to load your ancestors with lies,
So that you contradict not mine ? Or the reverse ?
And to the Christian the same applies.
Is that not so ?

Saladin.

[By the living God, the man is right. I must be
dumb.]

Nathan.

Let us return unto our rings.
As said, the sons accused each other,
And each one swore before the judge
He had received his ring directly
From his father's hand—which was quite true—
And that, indeed, after having long his promise held,
To enjoy eventually the ring's prerogative,
Which was no less the truth.
Each one insisted that it was impossible
His father could play false with him,
And ere he could suspect so dear and true a father,
He was compelled, how'er inclined to think
The best of them, to accuse his brothers
Of this treacherous act, to unmask the traitors,
And avenge himself.

Saladin.

Well, and the judge ?
I'm curious to hear what you will give
The judge to say. Go on.

Nathan.

The judge said this : Produce your father here
At once, or I'll dismiss you from this court.
Think you I'm here but to solve riddles ?
Or would you wait till the true ring itself will
speak ?

But stop ; I've just been told that the right ring,
Contains the wondrous gift to make its wearer
loved,
Agreeable alike to God and man.
That must decide, for the false rings will not have
this power.

Now which one do the other two love most ?
Come, speak out ; you're silent ?
Do the rings work only backwards and not outwardly ?
Does each one love himself the best ?
Then you're all three deceived deceivers ;
None of your rings are genuine.
The genuine ring is no doubt lost.
To hide the loss and to supply its place
The father ordered other three.

Saladin.

Splendid, splendid !

Nathan.

The judge went further on to say :
If you will have my judgment, not my advice,
Then go. But my advice is this :
You take the matter as it stands.
If each one had his ring straight from his father,
So let each believe *his* ring the true one.
'Tis possible your father would no longer tolerate
The tyranny of this one ring in his family,

And surely loved you all—and all alike,
And that he would not two oppress
By favouring the third.
Now then, let each one emulate in affection
Untouched by prejudice. Let each one strive
To gain the prize of proving by results
The virtue of his ring, and aid its power
With gentleness and heartiest friendliness,
With benevolence and true devotedness to God ;
And if the virtue of the ring will then
Have proved itself among your children's children,
I summon them to appear again
Before this judgment seat,
After a thousand thousand years.
Here then will sit a judge more wise than I,
Who will pronounce. Go you.
So said the modest judge.

Saladin.

God, oh God !

Nathan.

Saladin, if now you feel yourself to be
That promised sage—

Saladin

*Who rushes to him and seizes his hand, which to
the end he does not let go).*

I dust ? I nothing ? Oh God !

NATHAN AND SALADIN—

Saladin, if now you feel yourself to be
That promised sage——

ACT iii., SCENE 7.

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W.S.

Act III

SCENE VII

Nathan.

What ails thee, Sultan?

Saladin.

Nathan, dear Nathan, your judge's thousand
Thousand years have not yet fled,
His judgment seat's not become mine.
Go, go ; but be my friend.

Nathan.

And Saladin had nothing more to say ?

Saladin.

Nothing !

Nathan.

Nothing ?

Saladin.

Absolutely nothing. Why ?

Nathan.

I could have wished an opportunity
For a request of you—

Saladin.

Does a request require an opportunity ?
Speak out.

Nathan.

I've just returnèd from a distant journey,
 Where I've collected debts, until I hold
 Almost too much ready money.
 The times look like becoming serious.
 Indeed I hardly know where to bestow it safely ;
 And I was wondering, if you perhaps—
 Because always a coming war
 Requires money more and more—
 If you perhaps could use some.

Saladin

(*Looking Nathan steadfastly in the eyes*).

Nathan, I will not ask if you have seen
 Al-Hafi, nor yet inquire if some suspicion,
 Drives you to make me, of your own
 Free will, this offer.

Nathan.

Some suspicion ?

Saladin.

I would deserve it. Pardon me, it is no use ;
 I must confess, I was upon the point—

Nathan.

Why not to ask the same of me ?

Saladin.

Yes, truly.

Nathan.

Then are we both accommodated, but that
I cannot give you all my gold,
Is owing to the Templar. Of course you
Know him. To him first must
I pay a heavy sum.

Saladin.

Templar? You surely wont
Support my worst foes also with your gold.

Nathan.

I spoke but only of the one, whose
Life you spared.

Saladin.

Ah, now you put me in remembrance.
I had quite forgot this youth. Do you know
Him, and where is he?

Nathan.

How?

Do you not know how large a portion
Of your grace to him has overflowed
On me? He, at the risk of his new-given life,
Has saved my daughter from the flames.

Saladin.

He? Has he done that? Ah, he just looked like it.
My brother, whom he so resembles,
Had done the same. Is he then still here?

If so, pray bring him.
 So much I've told my sister of this brother, whom
 she never knew,
 That I must show her his living image.
 Go bring him, pray.
 How often from one sole good action,
 Even if produced by merest fancy,
 Do many, many blessings flow?
 Go bring him, pray.

Nathan (letting go Saladin's hand).

At once. The other matter remains
 As settled. [Goes.

Saladin.

I should have let my sister listen ;
 Now to her—to her—but can
 I tell all this aright ? [Goes from the other side.

EIGHTH SCENE.

*Under the palms, near the abbey, where the TEMPLAR
 is awaiting NATHAN.*

Templar

(Walking up and down—debating with himself—
 then breaks forth in this soliloquy.)

Here now the wearied victim rests.
 Well, good. I would not, would not nearer

Know what takes the mastery within me,
Would not beforehand seek to scent what
Therein may take place. Enough for me,
I fled in vain. And could I aught but flee?
Come what come may,
The stroke fell all too suddenly to be avoided. And
I refused so long and steadily to go amongst them,
To see her whom to see I was so ill-inclined.
To see her, and then resolve ne'er from my
Eyes to let her go. What resolve? Resolve is
Purpose, action, and I was only passive.
To see her, and feel bound unto her, and to feel
So interwoven in her being, was one,
And one remains. Apart from her to live
Is inconceivable, and would be death to me;
And even after death, where'er that be, were
Also death to me. Now is that love? That?
Does the Knight-Templar really love? And does
The Christian love the Jewish maid? Well, well,
What matters it? Here, in this Holy Land,
I've so much prejudice given up,
Which makes it even holier to me.
And what claim has my Order? I as Templar
Am dead; was to my Order dead, the moment
Saladin had made me prisoner. Was that my
Former head, with which Saladin presented me?
It is a new one, ay, and one which nothing
Knows of all that to the former has been prated,
And which bound it. It is a better one, and

For the paternal heaven is much more suitable.
That I can feel. For now I do begin to think,
As here my father must have thought, if all
The tales I hear of him be not untrue. Tales?
But they are credible, and never seemed to
Me so credible as now. Now when
I run the risk of stumbling where he fell.
He fell? I'd rather fall with men than
Stand with boys. His example guarantees
Me his approval, and whose approval else
Do I require? Nathan's?
Well, his encouragement, more than approval,
Will not be wanting. Ah, what a Jew! and
One who only will appear a thorough Jew. And
There he comes, and comes in haste, glowing
With joy. Who comes from Saladin in
Other guise? Heh! Nathan! Heh!

NINTH SCENE.

NATHAN and the TEMPLAR.

Nathan.

How? is that you?

Templar.

How long you've stayed with Saladin!

Nathan.

Well, not so long ; 'twas in going I delayed
Too much. Ah really Kurd, the man deserves
His high repute, and his repute is but his shadow.
But let me tell you quickly. First of all—

Templar.

What?

Nathan.

That he would speak with you,
And wishes you at once to go.
Now come with me into my house,
Where I for him have something to arrange,
And then we'll go together.

Templar.

Nathan, I enter not your house again until—

Nathan.

So, have you been already there?
And have already spoken to her?
Well tell me, how does Recha please you?

Templar.

Beyond expression ; but see her again
I never will ; no, never, never,
Unless you promise me upon the spot,
That I for aye henceforth may see her.

Nathan.

How wish you me to understand these words?

Templar (*After a short pause falling suddenly on Nathan's neck.*)

My father!

Nathan.

Young man!

Templar (*recovering himself as suddenly.*)

Not son? I beseech you Nathan.

Nathan.

My dear young man.

Templar.

Not son? I beseech you, Nathan, and I conjure
You by the first bonds of nature.

Prefer, I beg, not later chains.

Be it enough to be a man;

Oh, do not push me from you.

Nathan.

My dear, dear friend.

Templar.

And son? Not son? Not even if unto
Your daughter's heart, kind gratitude

Hath paved the way for love?
Not even if we both but wait your nod,
To mould ourselves in one?
Why are you silent?

Nathan.

Young knight, you have surprised me.

Templar.

I surprise you? Surprise you, Nathan,
With your own thoughts?
Do you not recognise them in my mouth?
I surprise you?

Nathan.

Well, till I know which Stauffen was your father.

Templar.

What say you Nathan? What do you say?
In such a moment do you nothing feel
But curiosity?

Nathan.

For see, I knew myself, in former days,
A Stauffen callèd Conrad.

Templar.

Well, and if my father also bore that name?

Nathan.

Indeed?

Templar.

I bear my father's name. Kurd stands for Conrad.

Nathan.

But yet my Conrad could not be your
Father, for he, like you, was Templar,
And was never married.

Templar.

Oh, as for that—

Nathan.

How?

Templar.

Oh, as for that, he might have been my father.

Nathan.

You're joking.

Templar.

And you in sooth take it too serious.
What matters it? Is bastard despicable?
The race is not—but spare me all this proof
Of ancestry ; I in return will spare
You yours : not that, indeed, I have the slightest
doubt
As to your genealogic tree—
Oh, God forbid. You can count it leaf by leaf
As far as Abraham, and farther back than that ;
I know myself, and will on oath attest it.

Nathan.

You're getting bitter ; and do I deserve it ?
Have I as yet refused you aught ? I only
Wished not in a trice to hold you to your
Word—and further, nothing.

Templar.

Indeed ? and nothing more ? Oh then, forgive——

Nathan.

Well, well, only come.

Templar.

Where ? No, not into your house—not that :
It is on fire. Go, and I'll wait you here.
If e'er I see her face again, I'll often see her,
Oft enough—if not, I've seen her much too often.

Nathan.

I will make all the haste I can.

TENTH SCENE.

The TEMPLAR, and soon afterwards DAJA.

Templar.

Much too often ! The brain of man doth
Grasp so much, and yet so often is filled

K

Suddenly—ay, suddenly with a mere trifle filled
 It matters not with what it's filled, if only it be full.
 Well, patience, only patience—the soul
 Soon, soon works up the stuff that's laid
 Upon her, makes herself room, and light
 And order soon again appear. Is this
 The first time that I am in love?
 Or was that which I know as love, not love at all?
 And is this only love which now I feel?

Daja (who has slipped past from aside).

Sir Knight ! Sir Knight !

Templar.

Who calls ? Ah Daja, is it you ?

Daja.

I have slipped past him, but he yet might see
 Us where now you stand ; therefore come
 Nearer me, behind this tree.

Templar.

What's the matter ? Why such secrecy ? What ?

Daja.

Yes indeed, it is a secret which brings me
 To you, and indeed a double one—the one
 Know I alone, the other only you. How

Were it if we made exchange? Trust
Me with yours, then will I entrust you mine.

Templar.

With pleasure, if I only knew what you
Take as my secret. That will
No doubt be seen from yours, so you begin.

Daja.

Just think of it! No, no, Sir Knight, you first,
I'll follow; be assured my secret
Has no value for you, unless I first know yours.
Only be quick. If I must worm it out,
Then you've confided naught to me,
And so my secret remains my own, whilst
Yours has gone for nothing. But poor
Knight, however can men fancy
To keep such secrets hidden from the eyes of
women!

Templar.

Secrets which we ourselves don't always know we
have.

Daja.

Well that may be, so must I then for
Friendship's sake first try to make it known
To you. Tell me, what did you mean by
Starting up so suddenly and rushing off
Leaving us sitting there without a word?

Why you have ne'er come back with Nathan?
 Has Recha on you made so slight impression? Eh?
 Or so much? so much! ay, so much!
 The poor bird fluttering on the limed twig, shows
 you my meaning.
 In brief own to me, Knight, you love her,
 Love to madness; then I will tell you something.

Templar.

To madness? In truth, you have a clear perception.

Daja.

Well own the love, and I'll give up the madness.

Templar.

Because it's so obvious in itself?
 A Templar loves a Jewish maid.—

Daja.

Seems indeed to have but little sense, and
 Yet oft-times there's sense in things, ay,
 Much more sense than we suppose, and
 It is not unheard of, nay 'tis frequent, that
 The Saviour draws us to Him by such ways
 As even the wisest men would ne'er select.

Templar.

Why so pathetic? (and yet if I say Providence
 Instead of Saviour, she is not so far wrong?)

But really you now make me much more
Curious, than I am wont to be.

Daja.

Oh, but this is the land of miracles.

Templar.

Well, of the wonderful indeed,
And can it well be otherwise?
In this place, the whole world presses to a centre.
Dear Daja, take confessed what you desire—
I love her, ay, and cannot see how
I can live without her, and—

Daja.

'Tis true? 'tis true? Now Knight, swear to me
You'll make her your own, and save her—
Save her here for time, there for Eternity.

Templar.

And how—how can I? Can I swear
What after all stands not within my power?

Daja.

Within your power it stands,
For with a single word I put it there.

Templar.

So that the father even had naught against it.

Daja.

Father, ay, what father? The father soon must—

Templar.

Must, Daja? He is not yet quite
Fallen amongst thieves—must not be forced—

Daja.

He'll be forced to will it, and in the
End will gladly wish it.

Templar.

Must? and gladly? Well Daja, when
I tell you now that I myself have
Tried to touch this chord within him?

Daja.

What? and he did not at once respond?

Templar.

No; he replied in a discordant key—
I was offended.

Daja.

What say you? What? That you gave
Even a shadow of a wish for Recha,
And he has not with joy acceded?
Has drawn somewhat coldly back, even suggested
difficulties?

Templar.

That's something like it.

Daja.

Then I'll consider not a moment longer. [Pause.]

Templar.

And yet you are considering?

Daja.

The man is otherwise so good,
And I myself owe him so much;
Why won't he listen to me! God knows
How my heart bleeds to force him so.

Templar.

I beg you, Daja, free me at once from this uncertainty;
But if yourself are undecided,
If that your purpose be good or bad, praiseworthy
or to be blamed,
Then be silent. I will forget that you had aught to
be concealed.

Daja.

That spurs me on rather than checks me.
Well then, know that Recha is no Jewish maid,
but is a Christian.

Templar (coldly).

Indeed ! I wish you luck. Was the labour sore ?
Let not the pangs of birth so frighten you.
Go on with zeal and people heaven,
If now no longer you can populate the earth.

Daja.

How knight? Has my news deserved this scorn?
The fact that Recha is a Christian child,
Is not a source of joy to you,
A Christian and a Templar, who loves her ?

Templar.

Especially as she's a Christian of your making.

Daja.

Oh, so you understand it ? That explains !
No ; I have yet indeed to see the one
With skill to make a convert of her.
'Tis her fortune long to have been
That which she is spoiled from becoming.

Templar.

Explain yourself or go.

Daja.

She is a Christian, born of Christian parents,
Has been baptised—

Templar (eagerly).

And Nathan?

Daja.

Not her father.

Templar.

Not her father? Know you what you say?

Daja.

Only the truth, which oft has caused me tears of
blood.

No; he is not her father.

Templar.

And has but as his daughter brought her up?
The Christian child brought up as a Jewess?

Daja.

Yes, indeed.

Templar.

She never knew what she was born?
And never has from Nathan learned she is a
Christian, and no Jewess?

Daja.

Never.

Templar.

He has not only brought the child up under this
delusion,
But left the maiden still in the delusion?

Daja.

Alas, 'tis so.

Templar.

Nathan—how? The wise, good Nathan
Has allowed himself to falsify the very voice of
Nature?

And thus misled the flowing of a heart,
Which would have ta'en a different course if left
unto itself?

Daja, you have indeed confided to me
News of supreme import, which may indeed have
consequences—

News which dumbfounders me, and as to which
I am just now uncertain how to act.

So give me time, and go.

He's coming here immediately, and might surprise
us. Go.

Daja.

Oh, I should die of fright.

Templar.

I'm at this moment quite incapable of speaking
with him,
So if you meet him say but to him, that we'll meet
at the Sultan's.

Daja.

But let him see no change in you.

Your knowledge must be kept to give the last impulse
to your plans,
And should remove all scruples in you as to Recha ;
But if to Europe you take Recha with you,
I expect not to be left behind.

Templar.

That we'll soon arrange ; but go, pray go.

FOURTH ACT.

FIRST SCENE.

In the cloisters of the abbey.

*The LAY-BROTHER, and soon afterwards the
TEMPLAR.*

Lay-Brother.

Ay, ay, the Patriarch is right.
Of all the missions he has given to me, but few
indeed succeed.
Why will he send me on such missions then ?
I have no wish to be astute, and wheedle,
And have my nose in everything.
I have no wish to have my hands in other people's
matters.
Did I for this forsake the world ?—
Forsake it for myself, and only for the affairs of
others
To mix myself in worldly matters more than before?

Templar (coming hastily up to him).

Good brother, are you there ?
I've sought you for some time.

Lay-Brother.

Sought me, good sir ?

Templar.

You do not recognise me then ?

Lay-Brother.

Oh yes indeed. I only thought that I should never
see you more.

And so I hoped to God I would not.

God only knows how sore to me the mission was,
On which unwillingly I came to you.

He knows if I desired to find an open ear in you,
Knows how glad I was, and in my inmost soul
Rejoiced, to see how frankly and without reflection
You at once rejected what was unworthy in a
knight.

Yet now you come ; you've reconsidered ?

Templar.

And do you know why I have come ?
I scarcely know myself.

Lay-Brother.

You have this matter reconsidered,
 And found the Patriarch not so wrong.
 That gold and fame are by his projects to be
 won ;
 That foe is foe, even if he's been our guardian
 angel, seven times o'er.
 This you have weighed with flesh and blood,
 And now you come to accept the mission.
 Ah, my God !

Templar.

My good, dear man, content yourself.
 On that account I do not come.
 I will not see the Patriarch as to that.
 On that affair I am unchanged,
 And would not for the world now lose the good
 opinion
 With which so good, so noble, and so dear a man,
 once honoured me.
 I only come to ask the Patriarch for advice.

Lay-Brother.

You ask the Patriarch ? A knight consult
 A——priest ? [Looking timidly round about him.]

Templar.

You see the matter's somewhat priestly.

Lay-Brother.

Yet will the priest ne'er ask a knight,
No, be the matter e'er so knightly.

Templar.

He has the privilege to err, which none
Like me begrudge him ; and yet indeed,
Had I to act but for myself,
Had to give account but to myself,
I would not need your Patriarch.
But things there are I'd rather do amiss
Upon the advice of others, than do right upon my
own.

Besides, I clearly see religion also is a party ;
And who still thinks himself impartial,
Doth but uphold his own, even tho' unconsciously.
And that being so, it's surely right.

Lay-Brother.

I'd best be silent, for indeed I do not understand
you sir.

Templar.

And yet (let's see, what do I really want—
Advice or resolution? if honest or if learned advice?)
I thank you, brother, I thank you for your friendly
hint.
What of the Patriarch? Be you my Patriarch.
I would much rather from the Christian in the
Patriarch seek advice

Than from the Patriarch in the Christian.
The thing is this—

Lay-Brother.

No further, sir ; no further. To what intent ?
You do misunderstand me, sir.
Whoe'er knows much, has many cares,
And I have vowed me to one care alone.
Ah, well. But see, to my relief the Patriarch comes
himself.
Stand where you are ; he has already noticed you.

SECOND SCENE.

The PATRIARCH

(Who comes up one of the aisles with great priestly
pomp) and the former two.

Templar.

I'd rather now avoid him. He's not my man.
A thick, red, friendly prelate, and in what array !

Lay-Brother.

Ah, but you should see him go to Court.
He only now returns from visiting the sick.

Templar.

Then Saladin must indeed be 'shamed.

THE PATRIARCH, THE TEMPLAR, AND
THE LAY-BROTHER—

He's not my man,
A thick, red, friendly prelate, and in what array!
ACT iv., SCENE 2.

To face page 160.



Act IV

SCENE II

Patriarch

(coming nearer and calling the Lay-Brother).

Here, is not that the Templar?
What wants he?

Lay-Brother.

I do not know.

Patriarch

(Approaching him, whilst the Lay-Brother and
retinue retire).

Well Sir Knight, it gives me joy
To see the brave young man.
Ay, and yet so very young,
And with God's help may yet be something.

Templar.

More, reverend father, than already is,
Is most unlikely ; most likely something less.

Patriarch.

I wish at least so good a knight
May bloom and flourish many years,
To the honour and good of Christianity,
And of the cause of God. And that will be,
If only his young valour will follow the ripe advice
of age.

Wherein can I at this time be of service?

L

Templar.

Even with that very thing of which my youth has
need ;
With advice.

Patriarch.

Most willingly.
But then the advice must be adopted.

Templar.

Surely not blindly ?

Patriarch.

Well, who says that ?
For no one verily should neglect to use
The reason given to him by God,
In things where it belongs.
But pray, does it belong to all ?
Indeed it does not. For example—
Suppose that God should through an angel,
That is a servant of His word,
Should condescend to show a means,
By which the good of Christianity—
The welfare of the Church—
Were to be helped in any way or strengthened,
Who would dare resist by an appeal to reason,
The firm decree of Him who gave him reason ?
And judge the eternal law of heaven's own glory,
By the little rules of his vain honour ?
Enough of this—what is the point on which
Now our advice is wanted.

Templar.

Suppose, right reverend father, that a Jew
Possessed an only child, we'll say a daughter,
Which he with every care brought up,
And educated in all that's good.
He loved her dearer than his soul,
And she returned that love with deep and pure
affection.

And now suppose one of our Order
Learned the child belonged not to the Jew,
But that he in her childhood picked her up—
Stole or bought her, as you will.
Suppose it known she was a Christian child,
And been baptised.

The Jew has only as a Jewess brought her up,
And as a Jewess and his daughter
Allows her to remain.
Pray advise, right reverend father,
What should in such a case be done.

Patriarch.

You make me shudder. But sir, tell me first of all,
If what you've told me be a fact or supposition.
That is to say, if you sir, only have imagined it,
Or if the case occurred and still continues.

Templar.

I thought that it was all the same,
In order to secure the opinion of your Grace.

Patriarch.

All the same? There sir, see how proud
Human reason errs in spiritual things.
On no account. For if this suppositious case
Is but a play of fancy, it would not repay
The trouble to think it out,
And I'd refer you sir, but to the theatre,
Where such events are handled *pro* and *con*
With much applause. But if you sir, have not tried,
Merely to make sport with me by a theatic tale,
And the event is really true;
If such in this my diocese exists,
In this dear city of Jerusalem, why then——

Templar.

And what then?

Patriarch.

Then on the Jew, without the least delay,
Must be inflicted the penalty which, both
By papal and imperial laws, against such crime
And heinous deed has been decreed.

Templar.

So?

Patriarch.

And these same laws decree,
The Jew who leads a Christian to apostasy,
Decree him to the stake and faggot.

Templar.

So?

Patriarch.

And how much more the Jew,
Who tears by force a helpless Christian child
From the holy covenant of its baptism.
For is not all that's done to children force?
Unless, of course, what's by the Church done to
them.

Templar.

But if the child would have in misery perished,
Had not the Jew ta'en pity on it?

Patriarch.

That matters not—the Jew must burn—
For it is better here in misery to perish,
Than to be saved here, and be lost for ever ;
Besides, why should this Jew forestall the Almighty ?
For God can save whome'er he will—
Save them without the Jew.

Templar.

Then I should think, in spite of him, also
Save for ever——

Patriarch.

That matters not—the Jew must burn.

Templar.

That grieves me much, especially as 'tis said
He hath the maiden educated rather in no creed
Than in his own, and hath her taught of God
Nor more nor less than reason teaches.

Patriarch.

That matters not—the Jew must burn.
Yes, on that account deserves thrice over
To be burned. What? let a child grow up
Without a creed? How? not to teach a
Child the greatest duty, to believe? That
Is unpardonable, and I am much surprised
That you, Sir Knight, yourself—

Templar.

The rest, right reverend father, if God will,
In the confessional— [Is going.]

Patriarch.

What? not even give me explanation?
Not name the reprobate, this Jew?
Not bring him here immediately? Oh, here
I know my course, I go at once to Saladin.
According to the terms of truce which he has sworn,
The Sultan must protect us—protect us
In all rights, and doctrines, which may belong
To our most holy faith. Thank God we've the
original.

We have his hand, his seal, and I'll soon show him—
Soon ! how dangerous even to the State it is,
Naught to believe. All bonds of citizenship
Are loosed and torn asunder, if man's
Permitted to believe in nothing.
Away, away with such impiety.

Templar.

'Tis pity I have not now leisure, to enjoy
This excellent discourse. I'm sent for by the Sultan.

Patriarch.

Indeed? Well then. Indeed—then——

Templar.

I will prepare the Sultan, if your right reverence so
desires.

Patriarch.

Oh, oh ! I know that you, sir, favour found
With Saladin ; I pray to be in all humility
Remembered to him. 'Tis zeal to God
Impels me on, and what I do too much,
I do to Him ; that, you sir, will I'm sure consider ;
And now, Sir Knight, I may assume,
What you've just told me of the Jew
Was but a problem ? that is to say——

Templar.

A problem only.

[Goes.

Patriarch.

[As to whose foundations I must deeper search.
 'Twill be another mission for good brother Bonafides.]

Hither, my son,

[Conversing, as he departs, with the Lay-Brother.

THIRD SCENE.

A room in Saladin's palace, in which slaves are carrying a number of bags of money, and arranging them together on the floor.

SALADIN, and soon afterwards SITTAH.

Saladin (coming to them).

Well truly, this is endless ;
 Is there much more of this still to come ?

A Slave.

Still a good half.

Saladin.

Then take the rest to Sittah. Where is Al-Hafi ?
 What's here Al-Hafi must at once take care of.
 Or should I not rather send it to my father ?
 For here it will but vanish through my fingers.
 But indeed, at last one does grow hard,
 And now it will require some art

To squeeze much out of me,
At least until the money come from Egypt.
Till then must poverty see to itself.
The expenses at the sepulchre, if they but continue,
And if the Christian pilgrims
May not with empty hands depart,
If only—

Sittah.

Now what is this? What means
This gold sent me?

Saladin.

Pay thyself with it, and if anything is over,
Then lay it by.

Sittah.

Is Nathan, with the Templar, still not here?

Saladin.

He has been looking for him everywhere.

Sittah.

Just look now what I found,
Whilst the old jewellery went through my hands.

[*Pointing to a small painting.*

Saladin.

Ah, my brother! 'Tis he! 'tis he! Alas, it was he!
Ah brave dear youth! and lost to me so soon.

What could I not with you have undertaken,
With you but at my side!
Sittah, give me the portrait. Ah, I recognise it now.
He gave it to your elder sister—to his Lilla—
Who one morning refused to part from his em-
brace.
It was the last time he rode forth.
Alas, I let him ride off, and alone.
Poor Lilla died of grief, and never to the last for-
gave me
That I had let him ride alone. He ne'er returned.

Sittah.

Alas, poor brother !

Saladin.

Well, let well be ; all must, at some time, ne'er
return.
And then, who knows ? it is indeed not death alone,
Which mars the plans of such a youth.
He has far other foes, and oft the strongest,
Like the weakest, fall. Be as it may,
I must compare this portrait with the Templar,
Must see how much my fancy has deceived me.

Sittah.

That's why I brought it ; but pray give it me,
And I will tell you.
A woman's eye can best judge such.

Saladin (to a servant who enters).

Who's there? The Templar? Let him enter.

Sittah.

Not to disturb you, or confuse him with my
curiosity—

[*Sits aside on a sofa; covers herself
with her veil.*

Saladin.

Now good. That's good. [And now his voice,
How will it sound? For Assad's voice
Sleeps somewhere still within my soul.]

FOURTH SCENE.

THE TEMPLAR and SALADIN.

Templar.

I, thy captive, Sultan—

Saladin.

My captive? To him whom I have given his life
Think you I give not liberty?

Templar.

What becometh you to do, becometh me to learn
from you,
And not to take for granted.

But Sultan, Thanks !
Tho' special thanks for life to speak or swear
Accords not with my rank or character.
At all events, it stands again at your disposal.

Saladin.

Only employ it not against me.
Two hands the more indeed I grant
My foe most willingly,
But with such a heart to favour him,
That would be too hard for me.
I have deceived myself in nought concerning you,
My brave young man ;
You are in body and in soul my Assad.
See, I could ask you where you've hid so long,
And in what cave have slept ?
From what gennistan—by what good angel—
The bloom upon your cheek has kept so fresh ?
I could remind you even what we together
There and there have done ;
Could also quarrel with you,
That you have kept a secret from me,
Defrauded me of an adventure.
Indeed, that could I, did I look on you alone,
And not upon myself. Well, be it so.
Of this sweet dreaming remains at least
Yet so much true, that in my autumn
Blooms an Assad once again.
You are content with this, young knight.

Templar.

What comes from you to me, be what it will,
Is as a wish within my soul.

Saladin.

Let's try at once ! Will you stay with me ? about
me ?

As Christian or Mohammedan, 'tis all the same ;
In mantle white or other garb,
In turban or felt head-gear ;
Just as you will, 'tis one to me ;
I've ne'er desired that every tree
Should bear the self-same rind.

Templar.

Else would you hardly be what now you are,
The hero and dear gardener of the Lord.

Saladin.

Well then, if you think no worse of me than that,
We are already half agreed.

Templar.

Completely so !

Saladin (offering his hand).

A word ?

Templar (grasping his hand).

A man. Herewith receive more than you e'er
Could take away—one wholly yours.

Saladin.

Too much gain for a single day—too much.
Came he not with you?

Templar.

Who?

Saladin.

Nathan.

Templar (coldly).

No, I came alone.

Saladin.

What a noble deed of yours!
And what good fortune which decreed,
That such a deed was done, for such a man.

Templar.

Yes, yes!

Saladin.

Why so cold? Young man, believe me, when God,
By our means doeth good, we should not be so cold;
Even from modesty should not wish so to appear.

Templar.

'Tis pity, that here in the world each thing
Should have so many sides, one often
Scarcely knows how they can fit together.

Saladin.

Hold ever to the best, and praise the Lord,
Who knoweth how they fit. But young man,
If you will be so critical, I think
I must be also on my guard in dealing with you.
I also am, unfortunately,
A thing of many sides, which may not always
Seem to fit quite properly together.

Templar.

That pains me much. Suspicion, otherwise,
Is not my failing.

Saladin.

Well tell me then, of whom you harbour it?
It seemed indeed of Nathan. What?
Suspicion of Nathan? You? Speak and
Explain yourself. Give me at least the first
Proof of your confidence.

Templar.

Against Nathan I have really nothing;
I'm angry with myself.

Saladin.

And why?

Templar.

That I could dream a Jew could ever
Learn to be a Jew no longer ; that I could
Dream that, whilst I was awake.

Saladin.

Come, out then with these waking dreams.

Templar.

You know of Nathan's daughter, Sultan ;
What I did for her, that I did because I did it.
I was too proud to reap thanks where I had
Not sowed ; and day by day I scorned
Again to see the maid. The father was afar.
He comes, and hears, and seeks me out.
He thanks me heartily, and hopes
His daughter may me please.
He speaks of prospects and a happy future.
Well, I let myself be wheedled, came,
And saw, and found indeed a maid—
Ah, Sultan, I do feel myself ashamed.

Saladin.

Ashamed? That on you a Jewish maiden
Made impression? Well, that surely not?

Templar.

That to this impression my quick-blooded heart,
On the father's flattering talk relying,
No more resistance gave, but like a simpleton
A second time I sprang into the fire ;
And then I woo'd, and then I was disdained.

Saladin.

Disdained ?

Templar.

The prudent father won't refuse me flatly ;
Yet must the prudent father first inquire,
Must first reflect—of course—of course.
Did I inquire first ? did I first reflect
As she screamed in the flames ?
Indeed, by God, 'tis really something beautiful
To be so wise and thoughtful.

Saladin.

Now, now, be somewhat lenient to age.
How long can his refusal last ? Will he
Indeed of you desire that you become a Jew ?

Templar.

Who knows ?

Saladin.

Who knows ? He who knows Nathan better.

M

Templar.

The superstition in which we have grown up
Does not lose (even if we see through it)
Its power on us, on that account ;
All are not free who mock their chains.

Saladin.

Most sagely spoken ; but Nathan, surely Nathan——

Templar.

The worst of superstitions is, to think
One's own the most supportable.

Saladin.

Indeed that may be, but Nathan, Nathan——

Templar.

To it alone trust simple human-kind
Until to truth's bright rays it grows accustomed.
To it alone——

Saladin.

Well, good, but Nathan ; such
Weakness is not Nathan's fate.

Templar.

This thought I also ; but if this paragon
Of human-kind were only but a common Jew,

Who sought for Christian children
To bring them up as Jews—how then?

Saladin.

And who says that of him?

Templar.

The maiden even, with whom he would allure me,
With hope of whom he seemed so eager
To repay the service he would not have me
Do in vain—this maiden, even, is not his daughter,
Is but a kidnapped Christian child.

Saladin.

Whom he in spite thereof would not give you?

Templar.

Would or would not, he is found out.
The tolerant talker is unmasked ;
And I will set upon the track of this
Jew wolf in philosophic sheepskin,
Hounds that will worry him.

Saladin.

Christian, be calm !

Templar.

What? be calm, Christian? If Jew and Moslem
Insist on being Jew and Moslem, and shall
The Christian alone refrain?

Saladin (more earnestly).

Christian, be calm.

Templar (calmly).

I feel the weight of the reproach, which
Saladin would press into this word.
Did I but know how Assad—Assad
In my place—would have borne himself.

Saladin.

Not much better, most likely quite as stormy.
But who hath taught you thus like him, to bribe
Me with a single word? If everything
Exists as you tell me, I can indeed
Myself scarcely find Nathan in it.
Yet he's my friend, and my friends must not with
Each other quarrel. Listen you to reason,
And be careful. Denounce him not as victim
To the enthusiasts of your mob ;
Saying nothing of the revenge
Your clergy certainly would seek to wreak on him,
And claim my agency in doing it ;
And do not you assume the Christian rôle
For very spite of Jew and Mussulman.

Templar.

Soon it will be too late ;
Thanks to the Patriarch's bloodthirstiness,
Whose tool I shudder to become !

Saladin.

How? Went you to the Patriarch sooner than
to me?

Templar.

In passion's storm, and in the whirlwind
Of indecision. Forgive! I fear
You will discover nothing more of Assad in me.

Saladin.

And were it not this fear itself! I think
I know out of what faults our virtues spring.
Practise the virtues, and the faults will not
Hurt you with me. But go, seek Nathan,
As he sought you, and bring him here, for I must
Have you reconciled; and if you seriously desire
The maid, be calm, she's yours; and Nathan
Must be made to feel, he may bring up a
Christian child without swine flesh. Now go.

[*The Templar goes, and Sittah
quits the sofa.*

FIFTH SCENE.

SALADIN and SITTAH.

Sittah.

Quite extraordinary.

*Saladin.*Well Sittah, must my Assad not have been
A noble and a handsome youth?*Sittah.*If he were such, and if the Templar sat
Not for this picture. But then, how could you
E'er forget to ask about his parentage?*Saladin.*And specially about his mother? and if she ne'er
Was in this land? That's what you mean?*Sittah.*

You'll make it out so.

*Saladin.*Oh, nothing were more probable, for Assad
Was to beauteous Christian dames so welcome,
And to beauteous Christian dames was so devoted,
That once the rumour ran—— Well, well,
One does not like to speak of it. Enough,

I have him here again, with all his faults ;
With all the humours of his tender heart
Again we'll have him. Oh then, but Nathan
Must give him the maid. Don't you think so ?

Sittah.

Give her to him ? Let him have her !

Saladin.

Indeed ! For if Nathan in reality
Be not her father, what right or claim has
He upon her ? He who thus saved her life
Must claim the rights of him who gave her life.

Sittah.

How were it, Saladin, if you at once
Should now adopt the maiden ? and from the
Unrightful owner should withdraw her ?

Saladin.

Is there necessity for that ?

Sittah.

Necessity there may not be, but curiosity alone
Impels me to give this advice. For I would
Gladly know as soon as possible,
What kind of maidens certain men can love. .

Saladin.

Well, send and bring her.

Sittah.

May I, brother?

Saladin.

Yes, but spare Nathan. Nathan must not know,
That we would separate them by force.

Sittah.

Don't be afraid.

Saladin.

And now where our Al-Hafi is, I must
Myself find out.

SIXTH SCENE.

*A hall in Nathan's house, opposite the Palms, as in
the First Scene of the First Act. A part of
the merchandise and precious goods, there men-
tioned, now unpacked.*

NATHAN and DAJA.

Daja.

Oh, all is splendid, all is exquisite ;
All is as you alone know how to give.
Now, where was made the silver cloth
With golden sprays ? What might it cost ?
Well, that I call a bridal dress ;
A queen could not desire a better.

Nathan.

A bridal dress? Why then bridal dress?

Daja.

Well now, you thought indeed not of that,
When you bought it; but really, Nathan,
That and no other must it be.
It's as if ordered for a bridal dress.
This ground of white, the sign of innocence,
And golden streams which run through all the
ground,
Symbol of wealth. Do you see? 'Tis lovely!

Nathan.

Why all this wit? Whose bridal dress
Do you portray to me so learnedly?
Are you engaged?

Daja.

I?

Nathan.

Well then, who?

Daja.

I? gracious God!

Nathan.

Who then? Whose bridal dress then do you mean?
For it's for you—for no one else.

Daja.

For me? Is mine? And not for Recha?

Nathan.

What I for Recha brought, lies in another bale.
Come, take away; off with it, bag and baggage.

Daja.

You tempter; but were they the treasures of the world,
I touch them not until you swear, to take
Advantage of this opportunity,
Which heaven sends no second time.

Nathan.

Advantage? Of what? Opportunity? For what?

Daja.

Oh, do not seem so strange. Well, in short,
The Templar loves Recha; give her to him.
Therewith has then your sin an end,
Which I no longer can conceal.
The maiden would thus come again amongst
The Christians; become then what she is;
Become then what she was; and you,
With all your goodness, for which none
Can be too grateful, would not have
Heaped but coals of fire upon your head.

Nathan.

At the old harp again? but fitted with
Another string, which I fear, however,
Holds not, nor is attuned.

Daja.

How so?

Nathan.

Indeed the Templar would please me well,
And I would give to him my Recha
Rather than any other in the world; but—
Only have patience.

Daja.

Patience?

Patience? Is that not your old harp again?

Nathan.

Now, only for a few days, patience!
Look there; who's coming? A Lay-Brother?
Go, ask him what he wants.

Daja.

What can he want? [She goes and asks him.

Nathan.

And give him, already ere he asks.
[Did I but know how I could sound the Templar,

Without him guessing what can be
 The reason of my curiosity ;
 For if I tell it him, and my suspicion
 Without foundation be, I shall have risked
 The father quite in vain.] What will he ?

Daja.

He would speak with you.

Nathan.

Well bring him here ; meantime please go.

SEVENTH SCENE.

NATHAN and the LAY-BROTHER.

Nathan.

[I would so gladly be still Recha's father ;
 And could I not still be so, even if I lost the title ?
 To her herself I will ever be so called,
 If she but knows how gladly I would be so.]
 Go ! What service can I render you, good brother ?

Lay-Brother.

Not very much. I am glad, good Nathan,
 To see you still so well.

Nathan.

You know me then ?

Lay-Brother.

Oh yes. Who does not know you ?
You have your name imprinted on so many hands ;
It also stands in mine these many years.

Nathan (taking out his purse).

Well brother, well ; I'll freshen it a little.

Lay-Brother.

I thank you Nathan,
I would be stealing but from poorer men ;
Just now I will take nothing.
But if you will allow me, I would like
To revive my name within your memory,
For I may boast within *your* hands to have placed
What may not be despised.

Nathan.

Forgive me ! I'm ashamed ! Pray tell me what ?
And accept from me as penitence,
Yet seven times o'er, its value.

Lay-Brother.

But above all, listen how I reminded
Was to-day of the sacred pledge I brought you.

Nathan.

A sacred pledge ?

Lay-Brother.

A short time since I lived as hermit
In Quarantana, not far from Jericho.
There came an Arab robber horde,
Breaking up my oratory and cell, and
Carried me off captive. By good luck
I escaped, and fled here to the Patriarch,
To beg from him another nest, where I,
Until my blessed end, might serve my God in soli-
tude.

Nathan.

I stand on coals ; good brother, be but brief.
The pledge, the pledge entrusted me.

Lay-Brother.

Presently good Nathan, presently.
Now the Patriarch promised me a hermitage
On Tabor, soon as it is free, and bade me
Stay meantime as lay-brother in the Monastery.
There am I now, good Nathan, and long
A hundred times a day for Tabor,
Because the Patriarch employs me in things
For which I have a great dislike. Now, for
example—

Nathan.

Be brief, I beg of you.

Lay-Brother.

Now I come to it. Someone to-day has
Whispered in his ear, that somewhere here
There lives a Jew, who has brought up
A Christian child as his own daughter.

Nathan (startled).

How?

Lay-Brother.

Pray hear me out. He now commissions me,
Straightway if possible to track this Jew.
He storms excessively at such a heinous deed,
Which seems to him the sin against the Holy Ghost,
That is the sin which is the greatest sin of all.
But, God be praised, we know not quite wherein
Exactly it consists. Now, all at once
My conscience was aroused, for it occurred
To me, that I myself in former days,
Might have occasion given for this great sin.
Now tell me, did not a groom some eighteen
Years ago bring you a female child
A few months old?

Nathan.

Why so? Indeed, indeed, 'tis true!

Lay-Brother.

Ay! Well now, look closely at me,
For that groom was I.

Nathan.

Was you?

Lay-Brother.

The knight from whom I brought the child was--
If I'm right—a Lord of Filneck—Wolf von Filneck.

Nathan.

Quite right.

Lay-Brother.

Shortly before, the mother died, and now
The father was called quite suddenly, I think,
To Gaza. Thither could not the poor small worm
Be taken, and so he sent it you.
I think I gave it to you in Darun.

Nathan.

Perfectly.

Lay-Brother.

It were no wonder had my memory
Failed me, I've had so many noble masters ;
And this one served I but so short a time.
He fell, I think, at Askalon, and that soon after,
And was indeed a kindly knight.

Nathan.

Indeed he was, and one to whom I owed so much,
For more than once he saved me from the sword.

Lay-Brother.

That's beautiful ! and therefore you'd receive
His daughter all the more willingly.

Nathan.

You may believe it.

Lay-Brother.

Where is she now ? Not dead, I hope ?
I trust she is not dead. If no one else than you
And I know of this matter, all will come right.

Nathan.

Will it ?

Lay-Brother.

Believe me, Nathan.
For see, I think this way. Whene'er I find
That in the good which I would do, there is
Too much of evil mixed, I rather leave
The good undone ; for we well know what evil is,
But by no means the good. It was but natural,
That if the Christian child should be well educated,
You should as your own daughter rear her :
That you should do so with such love and loyalty,
And must you be so recompensed ? I cannot be a
party to it.
Indeed you would have done more wisely,
If you thro' second hands had brought her up
as Christian ;

N

But then you had not loved your dear friend's child,
And children so require love, ay, if but
The love of some wild beast. At that age they
Require love more even than Christianity ;
For Christianity there's always time.
If but the maiden, healthy and pious,
Has grown before you, she will remain before
The eyes of God even what she was. And is,
Indeed, the whole of Christianity
Not built on Judaism? It has often
Vexed me, Nathan—cost me tears of blood—that
Christians
Will so quite forget, our Lord Himself was Jew.

Nathan.

Ah, you, good brother, must be my advocate,
Should e'er hypocrisy and hate rise up
Against me—and for a deed ; ah, for a deed ;
Yes, you and you alone shall know.
But take it with you to your grave ;
Never has vanity e'er tempted me,
To tell the matter to another, but
To you alone I tell it ; in pious
Simplicity I will confide ; for it alone
Can comprehend what deeds the God-devoted man
May bring upon himself.

Lay-Brother.

You are affected, and your eyes now swim in tears.

Nathan.

You found me with the child in Darun ;
But as yet you know not, that only
A few days before, the Christians had slaughtered
Every Jew in Gath, with wife and children.
You know indeed not, that with these, my wife,
And seven hopeful sons were found.
I sent them to my brother's house for safety ;
They fled there and were burned to death.

Lay-Brother.

Oh, thou just God !

Nathan.

There, when you came, I had already lain
Three days and nights in ashes, and in dust,
Before the almighty God, and wept ; yea,
And at times arraigned Him. I was angry, raged ;
I cursed the world, and cursed myself; and against
Christianity I swore eternal and undying hate.

Lay-Brother.

Ah, indeed, I well believe it.

Nathan.

Then gradually returning reason came,
And whispered with her sweet persuasive voice :
“ And yet God *is*; yet is this God’s decree.
“ Come now and practise, what you’ve understood

" So long, and what is certainly not more difficult
" To practise than to understand." I sprang erect,
And cried to God, I will, I will,
If Thou willest only that I will.
With that you lighted from your horse and handed
Me the child wrapped in your mantle.
What you said then, or what I said to you,
I have forgotten. This much I only know,
I took the child and bore it to my couch,
Kissed it, and threw myself upon my knees,
And sobbed, O God, my God, of seven already
Thou returnest one.

Lay-Brother.

Nathan, Nathan, you are a Christian !
By God, you are a Christian !
A better Christian never was !

Nathan.

God help us ! That which makes me Christian
In your eyes, makes you a Jew in mine.
But let us cease to move each other ;
Here action is required. And though
A sevenfold love hath bound me to this stranger
maid,
And if the very thought should slay me,
That in her I lose again my seven sons,
If Providence demands her from my hands
I will obey.

THE LAY-BROTHER AND NATHAN—

Nathan ! Nathan ! you are a Christian !
By God, you are a Christian !
A better Christian never was.

ACT iv., SCENE 7.

To face page 106.



ACT IV

SCENE VII

Lay-Brother.

Well truly, I had already thought
To counsel this, which your good spirit hath devised
already.

Nathan.

But the first best comer must not tear her from me

Lay-Brother.

For certain not.

Nathan.

Who has not greater claims than I
Must at the least have earlier ones?

Lay-Brother.

Most certainly.

Nathan.

Those given to him by blood and nature?

Lay-Brother.

That's what I also mean.

Nathan.

Name to me quickly, then, the man who
As brother, uncle, cousin, or aught else
Is kin. I'll not withhold her from him—
Her who was born and been brought up, to be
Of any house, of any faith, the glory

And the ornament. I hope you know
About your master and his relatives
Much more than I can do ?

Lay-Brother.

That, good Nathan, hardly can I, because,
As I've already said, I served him only a short time.

Nathan.

You know, at least, the mother's family ?
And was she not a Stauffen ?

Lay-Brother.

Quite possibly ; yes, I think she was.

Nathan.

And was her brother not Conrad von Stauffen ?
And a Knight Templar ?

Lay-Brother.

Yes, if I am not wrong ; but stay.
It just occurs to me, I've still a book,
Of my departed lord. I took it from
His bosom, as near Askalon we buried him.

Nathan.

Well ?

Lay-Brother.

There are prayers in it. We call it
A breviary. I thought a Christian man
Might use it ;—not I indeed, because
I cannot read.

Nathan.

Never mind, come to the point.

Lay-Brother.

Well, this small book, at the beginning and the end,
By the Knight's own hand is written full
As to his relatives and hers.

Nathan.

Most providential. Go ! run ! bring the book !
Be quick ! I am prepared to give its weight in gold,
With thousand thanks as well. Go ! run !

Lay-Brother.

Right gladly, only it is in Arabic
What the master wrote therein.

[Goes.

Nathan.

'Tis all the same, but bring it. O God !
If I can only keep the maid, and by
It such a son-in-law could but secure !
Well, that's unlikely. Well, come what come may.
But who can it be, who brought the matter
To the Patriarch ? That I must not
Forget to ascertain. How if it came from Daja ?

EIGHTH SCENE.

*Daja and Nathan.**Daja (hastily and confused).*

Nathan, just think !

Nathan.

Well ?

Daja.

The poor child was quite frightened at it.

There sends——

Nathan.

The Patriarch ?

Daja.

The Sultan's sister, Princess Sittah——

Nathan.

Not the Patriarch ?

*Daja.*No, Sittah. Don't you hear, the Princess Sittah
Sends here and takes her home.*Nathan.*Whom ? takes Recha ? Sittah takes her ?
Well, if it be but Sittah takes her,
And not the Patriarch——

Daja.

How come you then on him ?

Nathan.

Now, have you lately heard nought of him ?
For certain not ? nought whispered to him ?

Daja.

I ? to him ?

Nathan.

Where are the messengers ?

Daja.

In front.

Nathan.

For caution's sake I'll speak to them myself.
If the Patriarch only be not in it. [Goes.

Daja.

And I ; I fear something quite different.
And why ? The only daughter, as she's supposed
to be,
Of so very rich a Jew, were no bad
Bargain for a Mussulman.
The Templar is out of it ; is out, unless
I venture now the second step as well,

And to herself discover who she really is.
Courage ! I'll utilize the first good moment
For that purpose, the first moment I'm alone
With her, and that will be perhaps just now,
If I accompany her. At least, a first hint
On the road can do no harm. Yes, yes !
Courage ! Now or never ! Courage !

[*She follows.*

FIFTH ACT.

FIRST SCENE.

The room in Saladin's palace, in which the bags of money were, and where they are still lying.

SALADIN, and soon afterwards several MAMELUKES.

Saladin (as he enters).

There lies the money still, and no one knows
Where he may find the Dervish. No doubt
He's somewhere with a chessboard,
And o'er it has himself forgotten.
Why not then me ? Well, patience. What is it ?

A Mameluke.

Most welcome news ! Joy, Sultan, joy !
The caravan has come from Cairo,
Has arrived in safety with seven years' tribute,
From the wealthy Nile.

Saladin.

Bravo, Ibrahim,
You are indeed a welcome messenger.
Ah, well ! At last ! at last !
Thanks for your welcome tidings.

The Mameluke (waiting).

[Now, hither with it.]

Saladin.

What are you waiting for ? You now may go.

The Mameluke.

And nothing for this welcome news ?

Saladin.

What would you else ?

The Mameluke.

No message fee to the good messenger ?
Then were I the first indeed whom Saladin
At last had learned to reward with empty words,
The first, if fame reports aright,
With whom he higgled.

Saladin.

Well, take one of these purses there.

The Mameluke.

No, not now ; you might desire to give me all.

Saladin.

Well, come here. There you have two.
In earnest ! Is he gone ?
He excels me in magnanimity.
Since certainly for him 'tis harder to refuse
Than 'tis for me to give. Ibrahim !
What's coming to me now ? Should I at once
Become another being, so short a time ere I depart ?
Will Saladin not die like Saladin ?
Then should he as Saladin not live ?

A Second Mameluke.

Now, Sultan——

Saladin.

If you have come to tell me——

Second Mameluke.

The transports from Egypt have arrived.

Saladin.

That I know already.

Second Mameluke.

Am I then, too late ?

Saladin.

Why too late ? There, take a purse or two
For your good will.

Second Mameluke.

Make it three.

Saladin.

Yes, if you can count them, take them.

Second Mameluke.

There will most likely a third appear ;
That is, if he indeed can come.

Saladin.

How so ?

Second Mameluke.

Because he may his neck have broken.
'Twas thus : Soon as we saw the train approaching
We three sprang to announce it. The first one fell,
And I came to the front until we reached the town ;
When there, however, Ibrahim, the rogue,
The lanes knows better than do I.

Saladin.

But he who fell, friend, he who fell !
Ride and meet him.

Second Mameluke.

That gladly will I, and if he lives,
Half of this gold is his.

[Goes.]

Saladin.

There, what a noble fellow that is ;
Who else can boast to have such Mamelukes ?
And may I not indulge the thought,
That my example helped to make them such ?
Away then with the thought, at last
To accustom them to one quite different.

A Third Mameluke.

Sultan—

Saladin.

Are you he who fell ?

Third Mameluke.

No, I but announce that Emir Mansor,
Who the caravan commanded, is just
Alighting from his horse.

Saladin.

Bring him quickly. Ah, there he is.

SECOND SCENE.

EMIR MANSOR and SALADIN.

Saladin.

Right welcome, Emir. How have things gone ?
But Mansor, Mansor, we have long expected you.

Mansor.

This letter will report what thy Abdulkassam
Had to achieve, in putting down the unrest
At Thebes, ere we durst start upon our journey.
Since then I hurried on the train, as much as ever
possible.

Saladin.

I do believe it ; and now, good Mansor,
Take immediately a fresh escort ;
I'm sure you'll do it willingly ;
A fresh escort at once, for you must farther
March immediately, must take most of the money
Unto my father up to Lebanon.

Mansor.

Right willingly ; most willingly.

Saladin.

And do not let your escort be too weak,—
Things are no longer safe on Lebanon.
Have you heard of it ? The Templars again are
active,
So be well on your guard. Come now, where is
the train ?
I must see it, and will all arrange myself.
You there ! I'm afterwards with Sittah.

THIRD SCENE.

The palms before Nathan's house.

Templar (walking up and down).

Into the house I will not go;
He'll surely show himself at last.
They formerly observed me soon, and gladly,
And also again I'll see it, that he
Won't leave me to wander so before his door.
H'm. I am very irritable.
What has so embittered me against him?
He said indeed that so far he denied me nothing.
And Saladin has undertaken to secure assent.
How is it? Does the Christian really
Nestle deeper in me, than does the Jew in him?
Who knows himself aright? Could I not gladly
Grant the little booty, which on a favourable occa-
sion
He wrested from the Christians? Indeed, no little
booty.
But such a creature! A creature? ay, and whose?
Sure not the slave's, who floated the poor block
On to life's barren strand, and then decamped?
But rather is the artist's, who in this
Abandoned block beheld the godlike form,
And hewed it out? Ay, Recha's true father
Is the Jew, and he, spite of the Christian

O

Who begot her, remains her father through eternity.
If I think of her as only but a Christian lass,
Separate entirely from all that
Which I think the Jew alone has given her :
Speak, heart, what was there in her that pleased
thee ?
But little ; nothing. Even her smile
Were nothing but a soft, sweet motion of her
muscles,
And that which makes her smile, unworthy of the
charm
With which it clothes her lips. No ; even not her
smile.
I've seen much prettier smiles appear in wit and
trifling,
In jesting, flattery, and coquetting.
Have they e'er charmed ? or awaked the wish
To spend my life but in their sunshine ?
I did not know it ; and yet I'm peevish
Towards him, to whom alone she owes this higher
worth.
And why ? and why ? Do I deserve the taunt
With which I was dismissed by Saladin ?
'Tis bad enough, indeed, that Saladin should think
so.
How small I must have seemed to him !
And how contemptible, and all that for a girl !
Kurd, Kurd, that must not be !
Back to thyself ! And if, besides, Daja

Has but told me gossip, not easily to be proved ?
See, there he comes at last, deeply engaged
In conversation. Ha ! with whom ? With him,
My good Lay-Brother. Then he now knows all ;
And has likely to the Patriarch been betrayed.
Ah, blockhead ! What is this I've done ?
How doth a single spark of this same passion,
Love, set all our brain on fire.
Quick and resolve what now to do !
I'll stand aside awhile and wait,
Perhaps the Lay-Brother now may leave him.

FOURTH SCENE.

NATHAN and the LAY-BROTHER.

Nathan (coming nearer to him).

Now, once more thanks, good brother, many thanks.

Lay-Brother.

To you, the same.

Nathan.

To me ? from you ? For what ?
For my obstinacy in pressing on you
That which you do not want ? Yes, if it were
But given ! you will not be made by force richer
than I ?

Lay-Brother.

Besides, the book does not belong to me,
It belongs unto the daughter,
And is her father's only legacy,
Except that she has you. God grant you never
may regret
That you have so much done for her.

Nathan.

Can I do so? No, never. Be quite unconcerned.

Lay-Brother.

Well, now, the Patriarch and the Templars——

Nathan.

Are quite unable to do me so much ill
That I could in the least rue anything
Much less that. But are you quite assured,
It is a Templar who incites your Patriarch?

Lay-Brother.

It can hardly well be another;
A Templar spoke with him short time before.
From what I heard, it sounded like it.

Nathan.

There is, however, only one now in Jerusalem,
And him I know; he is my friend—
A noble and a frank young man.

Lay-Brother.

Quite right ; the same ; yet what one is,
And one must be, in the world,
Does not always perfectly accord.

Nathan.

Alas, it does not ; but let them do,
Whoe'er they be, their best or worst ;
With your book, brother, I defy them all,
And with it go straight to the Sultan.

Lay-Brother.

God bless you. I will leave you here.

Nathan.

And have not even seen her. Only come
Soon again and frequently. If but
The Patriarch learns nought to-day—
And why ? To-day even you may tell him
What you will.

Lay-Brother.

Not I ; farewell !

[Goes.

Nathan.

Now don't forget us, brother ! God,
If I at once 'neath this free heaven
Might cast me down upon my knees !
The knot which oft, so often, caused me fear,

Now loosens of itself.

Oh God, how lightly feels my heart that now
I have upon this earth naught to conceal ;
And now can walk before my fellow men,
Free as before Thyself, who judgeth but
The man alone, not by his deeds,
Which so seldom really are his own, O God.

FIFTH SCENE.

NATHAN and the TEMPLAR,

Who joins him from the side, where he was concealed.

Templar.

Hey ! Nathan, wait and take me with you.

Nathan.

Who calls ? Oh, knight, it's you !
Where have you been ?
I did not find you at the Sultan's ?

Templar.

We missed each other. Take it not amiss.

Nathan.

I'll not ; but the Sultan——

Templar.

You had just gone.

Nathan.

You spoke with him, however?

Oh, well, that's right.

Templar.

He wishes still to speak with us together.

Nathan.

So much the better; only come with me,
I was just on my way to him.

Templar.

May I ask you, Nathan, who was that who left you?

Nathan.

Do you not know him, then?

Templar.

Wasn't that good fellow, the Lay-Brother,
Whom the Patriarch so gladly uses
To scent out matters?

Nathan.

May be. At least, he's with the Patriarch.

Templar.

The trick's indeed not bad, to send
Simplicity before rascality.

Nathan.

Yes, the stupid,—not the pious.

Templar.

In the pious no Patriarch will believe.

Nathan.

I'll warrant this one will not help his Patriarch,
To accomplish aught unworthy.

Templar.

So he pretends ; but said he naught to you of me ?

Nathan.

Of you ? Well nothing certainly by name.
I think he hardly knows your name ?

Templar.

Well, hardly.

Nathan.

Of some Templar, indeed, he told me—

Templar.

Ay, what ?

Nathan.

By whom, once and for all, he meant not you.

Templar.

Who knows? Just let me hear.

Nathan.

That one accused me to his Patriarch.

Templar.

Accused you? Then by his favour he has lied.
But, hear me, Nathan; I am not a man
Could bring myself to deny whate'er I did.
What I have done, I did; yet neither
Am I one who would defend all that he does as good.
Why should I shame me for a single error?
And have I not the resolution to correct it?
And don't I know how far a man
In such resolve may progress? Hear me, Nathan
I am your Lay-Brother's Templar,
Who's said to have accused you. You well know
What has made me peevish; what set the blood
A-seething in my veins. I, fool!
I came with soul and body
To throw me in your arms;
And how did you receive me, Nathan?
How cold, how lukewarm,
And lukewarm is still worse than cold.

How measured were the terms with which
You put me off. With what strange questions
Taken from the air, you met me, instead of answer.
Even now I scarce can think of it, and yet be calm.
Now, hear me, Nathan, while in this ferment,
Came Daja, too, and threw your secret
At my head, and this seemed to me to give the clue
To your mysterious behaviour.

Nathan.

How so?

Templar.

Pray, hear me out. I fancied to myself,
That which you from the Christians took,
You would not willingly to a Christian give ;
And it occurred to me—— well, short and good,
To put a knife before your throat.

Nathan.

Short and good? And good? Where is the good?

Templar.

Do hear me, Nathan. Indeed I acted wrongly.
You are in no way to be blamed.
Daja, the fool, knows not what she says,
And is unfriendly to you ; seeks to entangle you
In an ill business, may be. I'm a young booby,
And always am enthusiast in both ways,

Now doing much too much, then doing much too little.

That may also be ; forgive me, Nathan.

Nathan.

If that is really how you take me——

Templar.

In short, I went unto the Patriarch,
But never named you ; that, as I said, is false.
I only put the case as an hypothesis
In order to obtain his opinion.
That also I might have left undone,
For did I not already know, the Patriarch was a rascal ?

And could I not have come to you and spoken ?
And must I bring the maid into the danger
Of losing such a father ? Now, what happens ?
The Patriarch's rascality, which ever is the same,
Has brought me by the nearest way back to myself.
So hear me, Nathan, hear me out.
Suppose he also knew your name ; well then,
What more ? The maiden only can he take,
If she belongs to none but you,
Can only take her from your house,
And send her to a nunnery ? Therefore,
Give her to me, give her to me !
Then let him come ! Ah ! he dared not try his hand
To take my wife from me. Give her to me !

At once ! be she your daughter or be she not ;
Christian or Jewess, or even neither ;
'Tis all the same. I will nor now nor ever
In my whole life ask you—be it as it may.

Nathan.

And you really think that it is necessary
For me to hide the truth ?

Templar.

Be as it may.

Nathan.

I never yet denied to you, or any one
Who has the right to know, that Recha is a Christian,
And nothing more than my adopted child.
Why I have not revealed it to herself,
That is a matter for herself and me.

Templar.

That, you in truth need never tell her.
Leave her the pleasure to look on you
In the same light, and spare her this discovery.
You have her yet, and her disposal rests
With yourself alone. Therefore, I beg you, Nathan,
Give her me. 'Tis I alone can save her
For you, a second time, and will.

Nathan.

Yes, could have.

But now no longer ; it's now too late.

Templar.

How so ? Too late ?

Nathan.

Thanks to the Patriarch——

Templar.

The Patriarch ? Thanks to him ? For what ?
Has he in any way deserved our thanks ?
For what ? and how ?

Nathan.

That we know now, to whom she does belong ;
Into whose hands she may with safety be delivered.

Templar.

Thank him for that ? Another may who has
More to thank him for.

Nathan.

From these must you receive her, not from me.

Templar.

Poor Recha ! How all falls upon thee !
Poor Recha ! What were a fortune unto other
orphans
Has become a misfortune unto thee.
Nathan, where are these relatives ?

Nathan.

Where are they ?

Templar.

And who are they ?

Nathan.

Especially a brother has been found,
From him you must obtain her.

Templar.

A brother ?

What is this brother ? A soldier ? or a priest ?
Let me hear, so that I may know what to expect.

Nathan.

He's neither, I believe, or perhaps both.
I do not know him yet quite perfectly.

Templar.

And otherwise ?

Nathan.

A noble fellow, with whom, indeed,
Recha will not badly fare.

Templar.

But still a Christian. I really do not
Know at times what I should think of you,
Nathan, pray take it not amiss ;
Will she not require to play the Christian amongst
Christians ?
And will she not at last become, what she
So long has acted ? And will not the seed
Which you have sown, be choked at last by weeds
And that concerns you so little ?
In spite of it, you only say,
That with her brother she'll not badly fare.

Nathan.

I think so, hope so ; but even should
She ever be in want of anything,
Has she not still yourself and me ?

Templar.

Oh

What can she have want of when with him ?
The good brother will provide right richly
His sweet sister with food and dress,
With luxuries and finery. What would

A dainty sister more? Ay, indeed, a husband.
That also will this brother in good time provide;
They are ever to be found, and the more Christian
the better.

Nathan, Nathan, what an angel you had formed,
Which now by others will be so marred.

Nathan.

No need of that; he'll always show himself
Quite worthy of our love.

Templar.

Do not say that; at least say it not of my love.
For nothing can share in my love—nothing—
Not the merest trifle, even but a name.
But stay, does she already aught suspect
What's going on?

Nathan.

'Tis possible, tho' I know not how; but why?

Templar.

Well, much; she shall and must first learn from me
The fate with which she's threatened.
My thought never again to see her till I called
Her mine, I now give up, and hasten—

Nathan.

Stay!—where would you go?

Templar.

To her, and see if this pure virgin soul
Is man enough to take the resolve
Alone becoming her.

Nathan.

That is?

Templar.

To inquire no further of you or of her brother.

Nathan.

And?

Templar.

And follow me, even if thereby
She were to become a Moslem's wife.

Nathan.

Stay here, you will not find her ;
She is with Sittah, with the Sultan's sister.

Templar.

Since when, and why ?

Nathan.

And there you will also find the brother ;
Only come with me.

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Templar.

The brother? Whose? Recha's or Sittah's?

Nathan.

Likely both. Only come away. I beg you come.
 [He takes him away.]

SIXTH SCENE.

In Sittah's harem.

SITTAH and RECHA engaged in conversation.

Sittah.

Oh, how I'm pleased with you, sweet maiden;
 But don't be so restrained, so anxious, and so bashful.

Be cheerful, talk more, and be more confidential.

Recha.

Princess—

Sittah.

Don't call me princess; call me Sittah,
 Friend, or sister; call me your good mother.
 For indeed I might be that; so young,
 So wise and good; you indeed know everything,
 And must have read much.

Recha.

I read? Sittah, you mock your little simple sister,
For I can hardly read.

Sittah.

Can hardly read; you little story-teller.

Recha.

I can read my father's hand a little;
I thought you spoke of books.

Sittah.

'Twas books indeed I meant.

Recha.

Well, I read a book with utmost difficulty.

Sittah.

Are you in earnest?

Recha.

Indeed I am. My father does not like book learning,
Which presses on the brain with lifeless signs.

Sittah.

Ay, what say you? He's not far wrong
And therefore what you know——

Recha.

I've learned it from his lips alone.
Ay, and of most of it I could tell
How, when, and why he taught it me.

Sittah.

Well, all hangs better then together,
For then the whole soul is educated.

Recha.

I suppose that Sittah also has little
Or nothing read.

Sittah.

Why so? I am not proud about the opposite.
Only why? Give me your reason,
And speak quite frankly.

Recha.

She's so straightforward, so unartificial,
So like herself.

Sittah.

Well?

Recha.

And that, my father says, books seldom leave us.

Sittah.

Oh, what a marvellous man your father is.

Recha.

Is he not?

Sittah.

How near he always hits his mark.

Recha.

Does he not? And this father——

Sittah.

What ails you, love?

Recha.

This father——

Sittah.

Gracious, you're weeping!

Recha.

And this father—— I must have it out.
My heart wants breath—wants breath.

[*Throws herself, overcome with tears,
at Sittah's feet.*

Sittah.

Child, what's happened? Recha!

Recha.

This father I must lose.

Sittah.

You lose? How? How so? Be calm;
That will not be. Rise up!

Recha.

You will not then in vain have offered,
To become my friend and sister.

Sittah.

I am, I am; only rise up, or
I must call for help.

Recha (mastering herself).

Ah, forgive me. My grief made me forget
Now who you were. No whining and no fainting
Will avail with Sittah. Cold, calm reason
Can alone prevail with her. Who so
Conducts his case with her will conquer.

Sittah.

Well then?

Recha.

My friend and sister, do not consent,
Oh, never,—that now another father
Should be forced upon me.

Sittah.

Another father? Forced upon you?
Who can do that? Or who would wish
To do it, love?

Recha.

Who? My good, bad Daja wishes it, and
Can do it. Ah, you do not know this good,
This evil Daja. Well, God forgive her,
God reward her, she's done me so much good
And so much ill.

Sittah.

Ill to thee? Then she can have but little goodness.

Recha.

Oh yes she has, and much.

Sittah.

Who is she?

Recha.

A Christian, who in my childhood cared for me;
And took such care! you can't imagine it;
She let me scarcely miss a mother's care.
May God reward her! But then she has
So teased and worried me.

Sittah.

And about what? and why? and how?

Recha.

Ah ! the poor woman, as I told you,
 Is a Christian, is forced from very love
 To worry me. For she is one of those enthusiasts
 Who fancy they alone can know the true
 And only way to God.

Sittah.

Now I understand you.

Recha.

And feel themselves constrained to bring all to it,
 Who have missed this way. Indeed, they scarcely
 Can do otherwise ; for if it be true,
 That only this way is the right one,
 How can they peacefully permit their friends
 To wander on another, which leads them to destruc-
 tion,
 To destruction everlasting ; else it must be possible
 to love and hate
 The self-same person at the self-same time.
 But that is not what forced me to make complaints
 about her.
 Her sighs and warnings, her prayers and threaten-
 ings,
 I easily could have long endured,
 And gladly so, because they brought me ever
 Upon thoughts, that were both good and useful.
 And who at heart does not feel flattered

To find they are so dear indeed to some,
Be it whom it may,—they cannot bear the thought
To lose us some time, at last,—for ever ?

Sittah.

Very true.

Recha.

But—but that goes too far.
That I can meet with nothing,
Neither with patience, with reflection, nor with any-
thing.

Sittah.

What ? To whom do you refer ?

Recha.

What she professes but now to have revealed to me.

Sittah.

Revealed ? and that but now ?

Recha.

Just now, as we were coming hither,
We approached a ruined Christian temple,
When suddenly she stopped, and seemed in mental
conflict

With herself, and looked with streaming eyes
To heaven, and then to me ; then finally said,
“ Let’s take a short cut thro’ this old temple.”
She went, I followed her, and with dread
My eyes swept through the tottering ruins.

Again she stood, and I with her,
 By the sunken step of a decaying altar ;
 I know not how I felt, when she
 With burning tears and wringing hands fell at my
 feet—

Sittah.

Good child !

Recha.

And by the holy virgin,
 Who there had heard so many prayers, and there
 Performed so many miracles, she conjured me,
 With looks of truest sympathy entreated me,
 To have mercy on myself ; I would, at least,
 Forgive her if she felt constrained
 Now to disclose what claim her church had on me.

Sittah.

(Poor creature ! I thought as much.)

Recha.

I am, she says, of Christian parents, and baptized ;
 Not Nathan's daughter, and he not my father.
 O God ! He not my father, Sittah !
 Sittah, again I fall before your feet—

Sittah.

Recha, not so. Rise up ! my brother's coming.
 Rise up !

SEVENTH SCENE.

SALADIN *and the foregoing.*

Saladin.

Sittah, what's the matter here ?

Sittah.

O God ! she is beside herself.

Saladin.

Who is it ?

Sittah.

Indeed thou knowest —

Saladin.

Our Nathan's daughter ? What aileth her ?

Sittah.

Child, come to yourself. The Sultan —

Recha (creeping on her knees to Saladin's feet, her head bent to the ground).

I will not rise — rise until —

I will not look upon the Sultan's face —

Will not admire the brightness of the eternal justice
And goodness in his eyes and brow until —

Saladin.

Arise ! Rise up !

Recha.

Not till he promises——

Saladin.

Come, I promise—be it what it may.

Recha.

Nor more nor less, than that my father's left
To me and I to him. I know not yet
Who desires to be my father, or
Who can desire it—and will not know ;
And is it the blood alone that makes the father ?—
The blood alone ?

Saladin.

I understand. But who was then so cruel,
As put this matter into your head ?
Has it been settled ? and all proved ?

Recha.

It must be, for Daja says she had it
From my nurse.

Saladin.

Your nurse !

Recha.

Who on dying felt constrained to confide it to her.

Saladin.

Already dying ! and likely quite delirious.
And were it true, well then, the blood alone
By no means makes the father,
Scarce makes the father of a savage beast ;
Gives at most the first right to acquire the name.
Don't be afraid ; and do you know,
As soon as these two fathers come, and strive
To get you, leave them both, and take the third,—
Take me then for your father.

Sittah.

Oh, do so, do so.

Saladin.

I will be a right good father to you.
Yet, hold ; a better thought occurs to me.
Do you at all require a father ?
If they should die ? Look round betimes
For one who will set his life on equal terms.
Know you none such ?

Sittah.

Don't make her blush.

Saladin.

That's just indeed what I intended ;
 Blushing makes the plainest beautiful,
 And should it not make the beautiful more lovely ?
 I have arranged now that your father,
 Nathan, and one other should come here ;
 Can you guess him ? Come here,
 You will allow me, Sittah ?

Sittah.

Brother !

Saladin.

You'll blush right deeply before him, sweet maid.

Recha.

Before whom ? To blush ?

Saladin.

You little hypocrite. Well, so,
 Rather be pale, as you will and can.

A female slave enters and approaches Sittah.

They cannot be already there ?

Sittah.

Good, let them enter. It is they, brother.

LAST SCENE.

NATHAN and the TEMPLAR, joining the foregoing.

Saladin.

Ah, my good, dear friends. You, Nathan,
Must I first above all things inform—
That you can have your gold again
Soon as you will.

Nathan.

Sultan !

Saladin.

And I in turn am at your service.

Nathan.

Sultan !

Saladin.

The caravan's arrived, and I am rich again,
As long I have not been. Come, tell me
What you may require, in order to undertake
Some real great enterprise, for even you great men
of commerce
Can never have too much of ready money.

Nathan.

And why about this trifle first ?
 I see there eyes in tears, and to dry them
 To me is of much more importance.

[*Going to Recha.*

You have been weeping ; what ails you ?
 Are you still my daughter ?

Recha.

My father ! —

Nathan.

We understand each other ; so, enough !
 Be cheerful and composed. If that your heart
 Be still your own ; if that your heart be threatened
 With no other loss, your father is not lost to you.

Recha.

None, none else !

Templar.

None else ? Well, I have then deceived myself.
 That which one's not afraid to lose, he has ne'er
 fancied,
 Never wished to have. 'Tis well, 'tis well.
 Nathan, that alters everything.
 Saladin, we came at your command ;
 But then I had misled you ;
 Pray do not now take further trouble.

Saladin.

How rash again, young man !
Must everything be made to meet you ?
And must all divine your meaning ?

Templar.

Sultan, you hear yourself indeed and see.

Saladin.

Indeed I do ; it's bad enough, you were
Not surer of your business.

Templar.

I am so now.

Saladin.

Whoever boasts of a good service rendered,
Doth but revoke it. What you have saved
Doth not on that account become your property.
Otherwise the robber, whose greed drives him
To brave the fire, were hero quite as great as you.

[*Going to Recha, in order to lead her
to the Templar.*

Come, do not be too exacting of him ;
For were he otherwise less proud and warm,
He had refrained from saving you.
You must set one against the other.
Come, put him to the blush, and do

Q

What were more becoming him to do.
Own you your love, and you propose to him ;
And if he can refuse you, or ere forgets
That you in this have done more than e'er he did
for you,
Then has he nothing of my Assad in him ;
He does but wear his mask and not his heart.
For after all, what did he do for you ?
Let himself be smoked a little. What's that ?
Come, dear maiden.

Sittah.

Go, go, dear girl. It still is little
For thy gratitude. Indeed, 'tis nothing.

Nathan.

Hold, Saladin ! Hold, Sittah !

Saladin.

You also ?

Nathan.

There is another here to be consulted.

Saladin.

And who denies it ? Nathan, unquestionably
The voice of such a foster-father must have weight,
The greatest, if you wish. You see I know
The matter thoroughly.

Nathan.

Not so thoroughly. I speak not of myself.
There is another, quite another,
Whom I must ask you, Sultan, first to hear.

Saladin.

Who is he?

Nathan.

Her brother.

Saladin.

Recha's brother?

Nathan.

Yes.

Recha.

My brother? Have I then a brother?

Templar

(starting from his vexed and sullen distraction).

Ha, this brother? Still not come?
I was told that I should find him here.

Nathan.

Only have patience.

Templar.

Oh, he has with a father saddled her;
And will he not soon find a brother?

Q 2

Saladin.

That was still wanting, Christian.
Such a low suspicion had never come
From Assad's lips. Well, pray go on.

Nathan.

Forgive him, Sultan. I forgive him gladly.
Who knows what we ourselves at his age,
Under his circumstances, would have thought?

[*Going up to him in a friendly way.*
'Tis natural, knight; suspicion follows
Want of confidence. Had you at first
Confided your *real* name to me—

Templar.

How?

Nathan.

You are no Stauffen.

Templar.

Who am I then?

Nathan.

Your name's not Kurd von Stauffen.

Templar.

What is it then?

Nathan.

Leo von Filneck.

Templar.

How?

Nathan.

You start.

Templar.

And rightly. Who says that?

Nathan.

I, who can tell you more ; ay, much, much more.
Meantime I do not charge you with a falsehood.

Templar.

You don't?

Nathan.

It may well be the other name belongs to you as well.

Templar.

Well, I should think so. [That was inspired by
God.]

Nathan.

Because your mother was a Stauffen ;
And her brother, your uncle, who brought you up,
Was called Kurd von Stauffen, and you in childhood
May have ta'en his name. He brought you up,
Because your parents left you in Germany,
As, driven thence by the inclement heaven,
They came east to this land again.
Is it long since yourself came east with him ?
And is he still alive ?

Templar.

What can I say? Nathan, indeed
Things are as you say. He himself is dead,
And I came with the last reinforcement of our
Order.
But what can all this have to do with Recha's
brother?

Nathan.

Your father—

Templar.

How? Have you known him also?

Nathan.

He was my friend.

Templar.

Was your friend? Nathan, is it possible?

Nathan.

His name was Wolf von Filneck, but he was not
German—

Templar.

That you know also?

Nathan.

Was only married to a German lady,
And followed your mother a short time
To Germany—

THE TEMPLAR, NATHAN, SITTAH, RECHA,
AND SALADIN—

Templar.

Nathan, no more, I beg of you.
But Recha's brother? Recha's brother--- -

Nathan.

Are you.

ACT V., SCENE 8.



ACT V.

SCENE VIII

Templar.

Nathan, no more, I beg of you.
But Recha's brother? Recha's brother—

Nathan.

Are you.

Templar.

I? I her brother?

Recha.

He my brother?

Sittah.

Brother and sister?

Saladin.

They brother and sister.

Recha (going up to him).

Ah! my brother.

Templar (steps back).

Her brother!

Recha (stopping, and turning to Nathan).

It cannot be! it cannot be!
His heart knows nothing of it. O God!
We are deceivers.

Saladin (to the Templar).

Deceivers? Do you think that? or can you think
You're a deceiver, you, for everything in you is
false—

Your countenance, your voice, and gait,
Nothing is your own. Not to acknowledge
Such a sister! Go!

Templar (humbly approaching him).

Sultan, pray do not misconstrue my sore amaze-
ment,
Nor in a moment, like to none in which you ever
saw your Assad,
Misjudge not him and me. [*Hastening to Nathan.*
Nathan, you give and take, and both with lavish
hands;
You give me more, much more, than you have
taken—
Endlessly more. (*Falling on Recha's neck.*) My
sister, my sister!

Nathan.

Blanda von Filneck!

Templar.

Blanda? Blanda? and not Recha?
Your Recha now no longer? God! you disown
her,
And give her back her Christian name!

Disown her, and on my account !
 Nathan, Nathan, why let her atone for me ? Let her ?

Nathan.

What mean you ? Oh, my children, my children !
 For is not my daughter's brother my child as well
 Soon as he will ?

[*Leaving them to embrace each other, Saladin turns in great wonder to his sister.*

Saladin.

What do you say, my sister ?

Sittah.

I am deeply moved.

Saladin.

And I !—I almost shuddering shrink as
 From a greater emotion, only prepare for it
 Well as you can.

Sittah.

How ?

Saladin.

Nathan, a word, a word.

[*Whilst Nathan goes to him, Sittah goes to them, to express her sympathy. Nathan and Saladin speak in whispers.*

Listen, listen, Nathan. Said you not just now——

Nathan.

What?

Saladin.

Their father did not belong to Germany?
Was not of German birth? What was he then?
Where else belonged he to?

Nathan.

That would he ne'er confide to me,
And from his lips alone I nothing know of it.

Saladin.

He was however not a Frank? belonged not to
the West?

Nathan.

Oh! that he owned most freely.
He preferred always to speak in Persian.

Saladin.

Persian? Persian? What wish I more?
'Tis he, or rather, was he.

Nathan.

Who?

Saladin.

My brother, of a certain, my Assad certainly.

Nathan.

Well, since you yourself conjecture it,
Take the assurance here, even from this book.

[*Hands him the breviary.*

Saladin (eagerly opening it).

Ah ! his hand ; I recognise it also.

Nathan.

As yet they nothing know of this,
And what they now may learn of it,
Remains with you alone.

Saladin (turning over the leaves).

I not acknowledge my own brother's children ?
My niece and nephew, my own children—
Not acknowledge them ? I ? I leave them to you ?
[*Speaking aloud.*
Sittah, they are, they are the children of my brother,
and of yours. [*Rushes to embrace them.*

Sittah (following him).

What hear I ! But could it be otherwise, be other-
wise ?

Saladin (to the Templar).

Now, haughty youth, you must love me,
Ay, you must.

(*To Recha.*)

Now am I become that which I offered,
Whether you will or not.

Sittah.

I also, I also.

Saladin (going back to the Templar).

My son ! my Assad ! my Assad's son !

Templar.

I of your blood ! So then the dreams
With which they lullabied my childhood,
Were after all still more than dreams.

[*Falling at his feet.*

Saladin (raising him).

Now, see the rascal ! He knew something of it,
And might have made his murderer of me !—Just
wait.

[*The scene falls on a general silent embracing.*

THE END.

Glasgow : Printed at the University Press by Robert MacLehose.

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